University of Alberta

The Good Old Game: Hockey, Nostalgia, Identity

by

Helen Patricia Hughes-Fuller ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**

in

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Date Sept 25, 2002

"The struggle of men against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

-Milan Kundera, ***The Book of Laughter and Forgetting***

"Keep your stick on the ice."

-Red Green (www.ioweb.com/redgreen/archive/quotesarchive.html)

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **The Good Old Game: Hockey, Nostalgia, Identity** submitted by **Helen Patricia Hughes-Fuller** in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **Comparative Literature**.

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Dedication

To the memory of Walter L. Hughes, center, and to J. Melvin Hughes, right wing,

of the Calmar Senior Hockey Team,

North Western Alberta Hockey League Champions, 1946.

Abstract

Over the course of the last two decades there has been an increase in both the quantity and quality of writing dealing with hockey-related subject matter. While there have been a number of studies discussing the connection between hockey and Canadian identities, until recently most of them have done so from either a social science or physical education perspective. There has also been a shift from an initial tendency to romanticise and essentialise our "special bond," to a more critical approach focusing on the hockey/identity nexus as constructed and therefore subject to deconstructions and historical re/visionings.

My study confronts the following paradox: At a time when hockey has never been less exclusively controlled by Canadians, we nevertheless see the persistence of a “discourse” which asserts, extols, and mythologises the notion that hockey is central to our national identity. The question then becomes, what needs do such mythologies fulfil? The research revealed a nostalgic longing for an idealised past which was symbolically identified with hockey. I found myself agreeing with other scholars who suggest that, at a time when history is purported to have ended, and in a world where utopian possibilities have been foreclosed, nostalgia takes on new, and potentially resistant, meanings. In light of the above, I concluded that representations of hockey (and indeed the game itself) draw much of their power from their ability to articulate a linkage between collective identity and social memory. Arguably, hockey allows us to "imagine community" in unproblematic ways.

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Any deficiencies are entirely my own.

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INTRODUCTION: "I Am Canadian."

"Canada...suffers from a contradiction between its public mythologies and its reality."[1]

-John Ralston Saul

Preamble:

In 1998, the CBC radio program *As It Happens* invited its listeners to suggest a collective noun for Canadians. Along with weather and politics ("a constitution of Canadians"), responses included a number of references to the game of hockey (a "rink of Canadians," a "blue line of Canadians" and even a "hockey night of Canadians"). Coincidentally, a survey conducted by ITV revealed that those polled selected publicly funded health care and hockey as the two most significant markers of Canadian identity. More recently (February 2002) television ratings indicated that over 10 million Canadian households were tuned in to the Olympic gold medal game between the Canadian and American men's teams, and the victories of Canada's men's and women's teams --reminders that the "Beaver" can, and occasionally does, "Bite Back"(Manning 4) -- were celebrated enthusiastically throughout the country (Todd D/4).

This preoccupation with hockey is far from being an exclusively "grass roots" phenomenon. Of late, whenever Prime Minister Chrètien launches trade missions to other countries, he refers to the participating politicians and businessmen as “Team Canada,” and this same Prime Minister appointed a retired National Hockey League star, Frank Mahovlich, to the Canadian Senate. Since the senate seat in question had already been declined by former Montreal Canadiens Hall-of -Famer, Jean Beliveau, it seemed that it was less a matter of choosing a particular individual (or an anglophone vs. a francophone) than of appointing a former hockey player! Also in the latter part of the 1990s, the 1972 Canada/Russia hockey series was recognised in a commemorative postage stamp depicting the series-winning goal by Paul Henderson and, just a few months ago, "The Pond" was enshrined on the back of the Canadian five dollar bill.

Even commercial interests have become involved. Molson's series of "I am Canadian" advertisements reflect their awareness of this theme's appeal to the brewery's target audience (i.e. consumers of beer and hockey). One suspects, however, that Molson's may have been surprised at the astonishing popularity of the "Joe Canada Rant" advertisement[2] which has resulted in a "mini-subculture" of fan appropriations (some parodied, some not). Seemingly, Canadians from all regions and social strata have never been more focused on our national game, or more prepared to assert its importance as a cornerstone of cultural identity.

The above events, while they do seem to indicate a trend, are not without precedent. Decades earlier, during the nineteen forties and fifties, Maurice “the Rocket” Richard had achieved celebrity status as the foremost goal-scorer of his day while acting as a flashpoint of tensions between Quebec and English Canada.[3] Later, in the nineteen eighties, Edmonton Oilers prodigy, Wayne Gretzky, became an even greater celebrity and a metonym of Canadian /American relations during the era of the free trade debate (Jackson 429). Viewed "objectively," hockey is nothing more than a sport played on ice, involving a dozen or so people, curved wooden sticks, and a flat rubber disk called a puck but for Canadians, it is also a cultural myth; one of the ways in which we construct what Benedict Anderson has aptly named our "imagined community." The sport of hockey began as a game played on the ponds and sloughs of the prairies and in backyard rinks from Brantford to Baie Comeau, and while this is still true today, it is also played professionally "from New York to LA," and features big stars, big media, and most of all, big money. Nevertheless, despite these changes, hockey has maintained its role as a "specific expression of culture in action" (Laba 336). Today, more than ever, we consider it "the game of our lives" (Gzowski).

With other scholars, I share the premise that "something that absorbs so much of a nation's physical and emotional energy needs to be confronted and explained" (Jarvie and Walker 8) and this led to my decision to conduct a study on representations of hockey. This dissertation looks at a selection of texts produced by those who have constructed narratives, created images, and otherwise engaged in discursive practices having to do with the game. The material included ranges from the explicitly literary works of poets and novelists; to the commentaries of sports journalists; to the reflections, recollections and rants of coaches, fans, and even the players themselves. These texts express the perspectives of both lay people and experts, "insiders" and outsiders, celebrities and ordinary folk. Selections are, by definition, never all-inclusive, but hopefully the scope is broad enough to convey a general sense of our collective conversation about what hockey means, since, for a great many of us, it appears to be more than "just a game."

I have also included a range of media and genres. Narrative prose (both fiction and non-fiction) is the predominant mode, but I do spend some time discussing film and televisual representations of hockey, and an occasional reference is made to poetry and song lyrics. Again, let me stress that the texts dealt with by no means exhaust the possibilities (drama, for example, is not included[4]) however, practically speaking, one simply cannot include everything.[5] The main reason for taking an extensive, as opposed to an intensive, approach is that it allows me to explore the topic at the "macro" level of discourse, but I am also interested in the extent to which discussions of hockey and identity challenge, extend, and even ignore, the boundaries imposed by particular genres and forms.

Research Questions:

While there have been a number of studies asserting the connection between hockey and Canadian identities, until recently[6] most of them have done so from a social science or physical education perspective. In contrast, my study looks at representations of hockey as representations.[7] (It also asks the question why, at a time when hockey has never been less exclusively controlled by Canadians, do we see the appearance of a “discourse” which asserts, extols and mythologises the notion that hockey is central to our collective identity? This led me to consider related questions having to do with:

1. The nature of social memory (and its importance to strategies of resistance).

2. The relationship between nostalgia for the past and (perhaps) utopian visions of the future.

3. How and why we "imagine" community (or, can anything be salvaged from the dreamworld of the Enlightenment).

Theory/Methodology:

My project follows the work of John Fiske, in that its "theoretical and methodological roots…lie in that loosely delineated area known as 'cultural studies'" (TC 1). Commenting on the origins of cultural studies, Fiske observes that it "derives from particular inflections of Marxism, semiotics, post-structuralism, and ethnography" (TC 1). Graeme Turner agrees, noting that cultural studies has roots in "the British tradition of Raymond Williams…European structuralists --Levi-Strauss, Saussure, Lacan, Barthes, Foucault …Marxism…the sociology of Bourdieu or de Certeau in France…[and] the American anthropological tradition" (BCS 3-4). While such eclectic origins may be seen as a weakness by some, they provide the scope required for the holistic approach to culture that is a cultural studies "first principle."

Fiske also points out that cultural studies is concerned with how collective identities are constructed:

> Cultural studies is concerned with the generation and circulation of meanings in industrial societies…These meanings are not only meanings of social experience but also meanings of the self, that is, constructions of social identity that enable people living in industrial capitalist societies to make sense of themselves and their social relations. (Fiske BCS 284-85).

In the case of cultural studies, such identities usually include (but need not be restricted to) those constituted along the lines of gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, et cetera. Recently, however, Graeme Turner, David Morley, et al. have also applied cultural studies approaches to the question of national identities.

Stuart Hall famously described cultural studies as "politics by other means" (ECS 12) and according to Haslett, cultural studies typically asks the kinds of questions that could be considered political: "What is the relation between culture and society? Does cultural value exist and if so in what? What is the relation between study and the lives of others outside the academy?" (Haslett 283). Grossberg affirms that "the questions of cultural studies are never generated within the academy…cultural studies is always responding to the dirty outside world" (TGSC 133). Similarly, Nelson stresses the importance of the relationship between text and context: "to speak of cultural studies is properly to address a range of texts and disciplinary and national traditions and to examine their explicit or implicit interrelations and social effects" (64). Referring to the specific case of literary studies, Nelson adds that a cultural studies approach to literature means forsaking analyses based on "ahistorical and largely immanent formalisms or thematics" (65) in favour of "an effort to understand literary texts as part of wider discursive formations"(65).

Finally, cultural studies is committed to the serious and critical study of popular culture, as a (partial and contested) democratic expression of the "dirty outside world" referred to above:

> The work of Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall and in particular the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies…has established the

> consideration of popular culture -- from the mass media to sport to dance crazes -- on an academic and intellectual agenda from which it had been excluded. (Turner BCS 2)

A cultural studies approach, then, is well suited to the topic at hand, since hockey, like other sports, is a form of popular culture.

Limitations:

This study locates itself in the domain of "collaborative rather than oppositional" scholarship (Hutcheon 1-2) and, as such, incorporates many references to the works of others. While I have not set out to test a hypothesis, nor refute any particular theoretical approach, exploring this topic will require me to review perennial scholarly debates regarding the value of mass culture, the power of the media, and the nature of popular resistance. It will also encourage me to confront the strengths and weaknesses of identity as a focus of analysis, and speculate on the viability of neo-Gramscian hegemony theory in the so-called "era of globalisation." I believe these are issues of ongoing academic interest, and societal relevance, the discussion of which (I would contend) is most fruitful when grounded in specific texts and contexts.

For both practical and other reasons audience research of the kind that relies on interview data has been excluded from this study. Although there are certainly legitimate arguments in support of this research model, I remain sceptical about the claim that it is somehow more "valid" than the analysis of text, since, in both cases, it is the researcher her/himself who has the last word. David Morley, who has done several projects involving audience research (*The Nationwide Audience* et al.), acknowledges this limitation:

> Feuer's argument is that [reception theory] endlessly defers the attribution of meaning…. We have merely displaced the whole problem of interpretation, for the audience responses also constitute a representation, in this case a linguistic discourse. (Feuer in Morley TACS 179-80)

Morley adds " We face the difficulty…of finally telling stories about the stories which our respondents have chosen to tell us" (Morley TACS 182). Nevertheless, having said this, I must stress that my (socially situated and individual) interpretations of texts are only that, and my frequent use of the first person acknowledges this absence of a "God's eye view."

Terminology:

My use of the term "myth" derives from Roland Barthes' definition of myths as signs which become signifiers of something beyond themselves – a "second order" of signification (Barthes; Fiske & Hartley). However I also use myth to refer to narratives of collective identities. "Myths are stories that dramatise important themes and tensions in a culture" (Gruneau and Whitson 133).

I also use the term mass/popular, not out of a wish to conflate the two semantically; I think the distinction made by proponents of the "popular culture" approach (Turner; Storey; Fiske) is a legitimate one. I do so to emphasise the extent to which, in my view, both are implicated in the "discourse of hockey." Hockey *is* the object of market-driven mass cultural production (Kidd and McFarlane; Gruneau and Whitson; Cruise and Griffith) but as John Fiske in particular has emphasised, such products are made meaningful only through a process of negotiated popular consumption. My contention is that neither term -- "mass" nor "popular" --should be privileged. Like Michael Oriard "I frame and situate my approach…against the long tradition of 'mass cultural' criticism and between the text-centered and reader-oriented theories that define the opposing options most influential in cultural studies today" (xxiii).

As a kind of postscript I would like to add that, in general, I have tried to write clearly and with a minimal amount of "jargon" since I also share Oriard's commitment "to the proposition that discussions of matters intimately touching the lives of all of us should be presented in ordinary language whenever possible" (xxiii).

Chapter Summaries:

The first two chapters deal with the *contexts* of the study. Chapter I, Sport, Culture, Identity, discusses the history and relevance of popular culture (and specifically sport-as-culture), as an object of study, from a cultural studies perspective. Chapter II, Lost Horizons, looks at some of the debates surrounding the continued (perhaps residual) existence of something called "Canadian identity" in an era of increasingly globalised cultures and postmodern uncertainties.

Chapters III through VI look at a wide-ranging selection of hockey *texts.* Chapter III, Ghostly Imaginings, takes cognisance of the extent to which hockey representations are fraught with ghosts and explores the latter's function. Frequently, ghosts serve as agents of social memory since they connect us to a lost past, urge us to right old wrongs, and remind us of "where we come from" (hence, who we are). In Chapter IV, The Age of Innocence, we again return to a lost past, noting the ways in which a time (the Golden Age of childhood) and a place (The Pond), connect with the Canadian pastoral tradition. Chapter V, Myths and Heroes, addresses the centrality of "the heroic" and its textual deployment in narratives about hockey. Heroes come out of the past to remedy the present, to "save the city"; myths are identity-shaping stories about our collective past; and hockey texts are amply supplied with both. In Chapter VI, Retropopulist Self-presentations, the heroic is abandoned in favour of the mundane. Both hockey celebrity Don Cherry and author David Adams Richards use hockey to construct personas that rely on a notion of the past as a time of power for "the little guy." The premise here is that populism, while politically incoherent and, in fact, often reactionary, can sometimes constitute a form of resistance.

Chapter VII, Simulacrowds, Cyberfans and Ranters, talks about *audiences.* This chapter deals with fan appropriations, and the struggle over who determines access to, and appreciation of, hockey; noting also the scope for acceptance, contestation, and transformation, of "prefabricated" fan identities. As fans we work to make a place for ourselves in the "discourse of hockey," be it on the sofa or in the stands. In the final section, entitled The Obscurity Ahead, I conclude that attempts to preserve some kind of (admittedly reconstructed) past are a necessary part of both establishing a sense of self (identity is intimately connected to memory) and imagining a possible future. In a symbolic sense hockey enables us to do this.

Conclusion:

In their comprehensive study of the significance of sport in the construction of Scottish national identity, Jarvie and Walker identify the following arguments regarding the social function of sport:

- that sport itself is inherently conservative and that it helps to consolidate official or centre nationalism, patriotism, and racism;

- that sport has some inherent property that makes it an instrument of national unity and integration, for example in peripheral or emerging nations;
- that sport helps to reinforce national consciousness and cultural nationalism;
- that sport provides a safety valve or outlet of emotional energy for frustrated peoples or nations;
- that sport has at times contributed to unique political struggles some of which have been closely connected to nationalist politics and popular nationalistic struggles; and
- that sport, whether it be through nostalgia, mythology, invented or selected traditions, contributes to a quest for identity be it local, regional, cultural or global (7).

While all the above have relevance, depending on the particular place, time and sporting event in question[8], it is point (vi) -- i.e.nostalgia, mythology, invented traditions and identities -- that this dissertation focuses on. In *Reflections of a Siamese Twin*, John Ralston Saul emphasises the dangerous side of this tendency to mythologise and warns that there can be slippage from myth making to mystification (Saul 6). He contrasts national myths to actual historical events which, for whatever reason, did not become part of our collective self-image. In contrast, or rather as a kind of complement, my project is about interrogating one such myth of identity to see what, if anything, it may tell us about ourselves. This dissertation owes much to Michel Foucault's and Benedict Anderson's insights on the relationship between discourses and identities. Much is also owed to the spirit of Walter Benjamin. Though explicit references are rare, it is his ghost that haunts this text.

Notes to Introduction

[1] (Saul 1)

[2] This particular advertisement, featuring a "generic" Canadian asserting his identity in the face of American stereotyping (he is "not a lumberjack, or a fur trader."...etc.) aired on *Hockey Night in Canada*. Subsequently it has also been shown on JumboTron screens in arenas, to the noisy delight of Canadian crowds.

[3] Rocket Richard's death in May 2000 was the occasion of a "state" funeral in *Notre Dame de Montréal* rivalled only by that of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau later the same year.

[4] In part, I justify this with the argument that drama and poetry are generally not considered to be "mass/popular" culture.

[5] There are also many examples of folk and or popular songs about hockey. The Tragically Hip and James Keelaghan have written about hockey heroes who die young; in the case of the former the song is based on the true story of Toronto Maple Leaf Bill Barilko. Stan Rogers reflects on the dashed hopes of young men who do not manage to become stars ("ninety-nine of us trying; only one of us flying"). The Grievous Angels present a woman's perspective in "Gordie and My Old Man," Jane Siberry's "Hockey Song" is a musical meditation on childhood and The Pond, and Stompin' Tom Connors' (to whom I owe my title) "Good Old Hockey Game" is an unapologetic assertion of hockey's superiority as "the best game you can name."

[6] A recent (October 2001) conference, on the theme "Putting It On Ice," held at St. Mary's University, Halifax NS, included papers from a range of perspectives and academic disciplines.

[7] I agree with Smaro Kamboureli that "we reside forever within the realm of representation: we represent ourselves through language and through our bodies…we also see ourselves represented by others" (2).

[8] The exploitation of sport for political ends by the Nazi's at the 1936 Berlin Olympics is probably the best-known example of function (i).

CHAPTER I. Sport, Culture, Identity

"It is impossible to describe modern life accurately without some account of sports."[1]

-Bruce Kidd

Defining Popular Culture:

Although I am dealing specifically with representations of hockey, it is a necessary first step to situate that particular sport within a broader context. How has sport *in general* been, in the Barthesian sense, mythologised, i.e. how does it function --not merely as a form of recreational activity--but as an aspect of popular culture? Further to this, what do we mean when we talk about "popular culture"? How does culture in this sense differ from the anthropological use of the term, or from that of Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*? Finally, how does sport manifest "the close relation that has always existed between culture and power"(Gruneau and Whitson 27)?

Raymond Williams was one of the foundational theorists of cultural studies, and in *Culture and Society* (a title which is a deliberate inversion of Arnold's) he argues that "culture" (along with "industry," "democracy," "class" and "art") is a term that underwent a significant change during "the last decades of the 18th and first half of the 19th, centuries" (CS 13). Specifically, he asserts that the term culture had come to represent five distinctly different things:

> …Before this period it [culture] had meant primarily the tending of natural growth and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter use, which had usually been a culture *of* something, was changed…to *culture* as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean first, 'a general state or habit of the mind' having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of the arts'. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean ' a whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual'. It came also, as we know to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment. (CS 16)

In later works (*Keywords; The Long Revolution)* Williams expands on the above, and emphasises that culture involves *both* texts and practices. According to John Storey, this recognition of both the textual and the practical aspects of culture is one which:

> …would allow us to speak of such practices as the seaside holiday, the celebration of Christmas, and youth subcultures as examples of 'culture'…[while] signifying practices would allow us to speak of soap opera, pop music, and comics, as examples of culture. These are usually referred to as cultural texts (CTPC 2)

The term "popular" is similarly fraught with a plethora of (sometimes oppositional) meanings. Storey, again drawing on Raymond Williams, notes that "popular" culture may refer to culture that is well-liked by many people, or it can be a residual term, applied to whatever is left after high (implicitly more valuable) culture has been subtracted. It can also be synonymous with "mass culture" and the associated notion of a manipulative ideology machine, producing what Adorno and Horkheimer refer to as "aesthetic barbarity" and "mass deception" (qtd. in Rivkin et al. 1047). As well, "popular" culture has been used to describe folk culture, i.e. a "culture that originates from the people"(Storey 12) and, as such, is somehow resistant to culture imposed "from the top down." Storey's scepticism regarding the authenticity of this "grassroots" culture is revealed by the following comment:

> Critical analysis of pop and rock music is particularly replete with this kind of analysis of popular culture. At a conference I attended recently, a contribution from the floor suggested that Levi's would never be able to use a song from the Jam to sell its jeans. The fact that they had already used a song from the Clash would not shake his conviction. (Storey CTPC 12)

Popular culture has also been the site of ongoing debates about the relative importance of the production and the consumption of meanings. In a plea for the primacy of the audience, John Fiske takes issue with the Frankfurt School and neo-Althusserian structuralism for assuming that cultural texts are all-powerful in shaping the responses of their audiences. Rather, he claims: "reading is not a garnering of meanings from the text ... it is a dialogue between text and the socially situated reader"(qtd. in Rivkin, et al. 1097). In "Encoding/decoding, Stuart Hall tries to resolve this dilemma by arguing that any interpretation always potentially involves preferred (intended, authorial,) readings, as well as resistant readings, and negotiated readings. Hall's starting point is a semiotic model. Due to the polysemic nature of language (and culture as a "signifying practice") there will inevitably be slippage between the encoded meaning of a cultural texts and the ways in which it is decoded by a diverse and (at least potentially) critical audience. To sum up, this means that “encodings” and “decodings” will almost certainly vary, and they may do so in highly creative ways. Nevertheless, such meanings will never be entirely random (assuming the producer and receiver are members of a common culture). In a tacit acknowledgement of Hall's claim, Fiske and Hartley concur that meanings are selected “from a paradigm of possible choices which is neither arbitrary nor unlimited” (114)

All the above, i.e. the plurality of meanings associated with the terms “popular” and “culture,” as well as the fact that some of these meanings are oppositional, points to a final important characteristic of popular culture (indeed, of culture in general). It is a terrain on which various meanings, linked with various interests (class and other) struggle for hegemony. Antonio Gramsci defines hegemony as “the indirect authority which the dominant group exercises throughout society” (12) but which is always challenged by subordinated or oppositional groups. Popular culture is a *site of contestation.*

Sport, as mentioned above, locates itself within the broader domain of "popular culture." However, as Michael Oriard points out, even after cultural studies was beginning to gain credibility as an academic discipline, there was still resistance to viewing sport -- dismissed by some as "the toy department of life" (Oriard xvii) -- as "legitimate" popular culture, and therefore a worthwhile object of study.

Sport as Cultural Practice:

As activities --what Storey above terms "cultural practices" -- sports and games are very old and[2], according to some, they reflect a spirit of playfulness and creativity common to virtually all human societies (Huizinga, cited in Gruneau and

Whitson, 12-13). This ludic quality is captured brilliantly in the following passage from Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion.* The youthful protagonist Patrick, out alone on a frosty Canadian night, suddenly notices:

> ...lightning bugs within the trees by the river. But this was winter! He moved forward...
>
> The ice shone with light. It seemed for a moment that he had stumbled on a coven or one of those strange druidic rituals...But even to the boy of eleven, deep in the woods after midnight, this was obviously benign. Something joyous. A gift. There were about ten men skating, part of a game. One chased the others and as soon as someone was touched he became the chaser. Each man held in one hand a sheaf of cattails and the tops of these were on fire. This is what lit the ice and had blinked through the trees.
>
> They raced, swerved, fell and rolled on the ice to avoid each other but never let go of the rushes. When they collided sparks fell onto the ice and onto their dark clothes...
>
> Patrick was transfixed....The hard ice was so certain, they could leap into the air and crash down and it would hold them. Their lanterns were replaced with new rushes which let them go further past boundaries, speed! Romance! (Ondaatje 20-22, cited in Kidd 159-160)

This impromptu game of tag-on-ice is being played by Finnish immigrants and, as Bruce Kidd points out, is one of a number of folk practices wherein we may find the origins of many contemporary sporting events. However, Kidd also cautions against the "naturalization of sport as an unchanging, transhistorical, and universal cultural form, performed and understood essentially the same way by all people in all societies" (12). Despite their origins as "play," today "sports -- as a plurality -- can be understood best as distinct creations of modernity, fashioned and continually refashioned in the revolutionizing conditions of industrial capitalist societies" (Kidd 12). How and why did this change?

The idea of sports as culture (as opposed to “mere” recreation) developed during a specific historical period and served specific purposes. Here again, the 19th century stands out as a time when the merits of sport, and amateur sport in particular, took on special symbolic meanings. "Pierre de Coubertin’s self-conscious use of the imagery from classical Greece[3] in his promotion of the modern Olympics in the 1890’s – and his belief that the Olympics should be both an athletic and artistic festival – set the stage for later claims that amateur sport and art were two sides of the same coin” (Gruneau and Whitson 17). Although never quite achieving the status of high culture, by the latter part of the century, sport was firmly established as a cultural practice; one which was “widely understood as something that promoted the ‘civilizing’ values of hygiene, fairness, emotional control, and respectability”(Gruneau & Whitson 17).

According to Gruneau and Whitson “the amateur code celebrated the ethos of the gentleman while systematically excluding non-Europeans, women and the working classes”(17). In commenting on the role of the English public school system in this process, Kidd notes that:

> They hoped the demands and discipline of game-playing would prepare boys and young men for careers in business, government, colonial administration, and the

> military by instilling physical and mental "toughness," obedience to authority, and loyalty to class. (14)

He adds that:

> The "character-building" ideology of sport, a form of social Darwinism romanticized as "muscular Christianity" was popularized by Thomas Hughes's best-selling *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and hundreds of imitators. (14)

In his thought-provoking work, *The Great War and Modern Memory,* literary historian Paul Fussell discusses the way in which the masculinised literature of sports was ransacked to provide metaphors for war. The poetry of Sir Henry Newbolt (self-proclaimed poet laureate of the English public school) was a favourite source ("play up, play up and play the game"), and the golden "lads" eulogized by A. E. Housman also helped establish the prototype of the idealised soldier/athlete. From playing field to battlefield was presented as a logical progression, and dying well as the (gentle)manly thing to do.

Class and sport were linked, but so were sport and race, or at least "nationality." The following passage from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Rodney Stone*, paints an equally idealised portrait of the simple, unspoiled, and fundamentally English, sportsman:

> A more cheery and hearty set of people could not be imagined....The ale-drinking, the rude good fellowship, the heartiness, the laughter at discomforts, the craving to see the fight—all these may be set down as vulgar and trivial...but to me...they seem to have been the very bones upon which much that is most solid and virile in this ancient race was moulded. (322)

Conan Doyle's enthusiasm can perhaps be partly explained by the fact that this period represented the apogee of British Imperialism. Social Darwinism had some currency and the ordinary English yeoman, while admittedly no gentleman, was still considered a cut above the yellows, blacks and browns. (The sun would set on the Empire shortly, but it hadn't yet!)

Not everyone had as sanguine a view of the common man as that expressed above. Again in *Culture and Society,* Raymond Williams identifies a strand of thinking that runs (*contra* liberalism and utilitarianism) from Burke through Coleridge and John Henry Cardinal Newman, and culminates in the "great tradition" of F. R. and Q. D. Leavis. This mode of thinking, which might be characterised as an organic and conservative humanism, had as its ideal "the development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity" (S. T. Coleridge, qtd. in Williams 121). This is the perspective that informs Matthew Arnold's famous work *Culture and Anarchy*, however as Williams points out, his opinions were also shaped by more contemporary concerns:

> …by the time he [Arnold] came to write, there was also another consideration: the general reaction to the social effects of full industrialism, and in particular the agitation of the industrial working class. (CS 121)

Arnold was concerned about this "agitation," and the following comments, sparked by the Hyde Park Riots, are less than temperate. He sees the working class as:

> Beginning to assert …an Englishman's right to do what he likes; his right to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes,

> threaten as he likes, smash as he likes. All this, I say, tends to anarchy. (Arnold, qtd. in Williams 132)

Here is identity construction with a vengeance, as Arnold makes the mob a metonym for the class as a whole. Hooting, threatening and smashing, the Victorian forbears of Eliot's Apeneck Sweeney slouch *en masse* towards Bethlehem --or rather, labour's New Jerusalem-- to be born. Re. the above, Williams, with his usual restraint, simply notes that "the Hyde Park railings were down, and it was not Arnold's best self which rose at the sight of them" (CS 133). He also reminds us that –*contra* Arnold-- one of "the most remarkable facts about the British working-class movement….was its conscious and deliberate abstention from general violence and its firm faith in other methods of advance" (CS 133).

For Arnold, as for many of his contemporaries, the cure for anarchy was culture. This was the premise of some of the great reform movements of the period (for mass public education, for temperance, etc.). Strategically applied doses of culture would humanise the slouching beast and teach it to walk erect. As mentioned earlier, sports were identified with a range of manly and ethical behaviours, so it is not surprising that they were made part of the cultural pharmacopoeia:

> The concert hall, library, even the playing field came to be seen as potential sites for education and class conciliation – sites for the construction of a common culture that would reaffirm the civilising value of the cultural accomplishments of the privileged classes. (Gruneau and Whitson 17)

If one remembers Pierre Bourdieu's insight that the working classes have been symbolically identified with "mere strength, brutality, and intellectual poverty" (SSC

369) one can readily understand why “the playing field” would be chosen as the best possible means by which the improving influence of culture could make itself felt.

The Sports Ethos and the Birth of Hockey:

What is true of sport in general is also true of Canadian sport. Bruce Kidd provides a vivid account of the evolution/ transformation of athletic activities during the colonial era:

> The early inhabitants of what became Canada played all manner of games in the course of what were for the most part remarkably physically active lives. The peoples of the First Nations were accomplished runners, climbers, swimmers, and canoeists, and they enjoyed many games and tests of skill and strength. The European explorers, entrepreneurs, and settlers brought their own amusements and tried the Native ones. By the nineteenth century, Euro-Canadians were engaging in a wide variety of athletic contests, though there was considerable difference in what was played. It was only males of the leisured gentry, and the officers of the usually idle British Garrisons who could devote the two to three days necessary to play a full innings of cricket…Upper-class women risked censure for being too physically active. Most other men and women were working too hard to have much leisure time, other than during holidays and special occasions such as harvest bees. In Lower Canada, the Anglo-Canadian elite tried to preserve the status and exclusive atmosphere of horse-racing for themselves by barring working-class *Canadiens* from attendance. Nevertheless organized competitions steadily grew, particularly on the grounds of the taverns that dotted the rural crossroads and growing towns. (SCS 15)

Despite these examples of the near-universality of various forms of games and play, the institutionalizing of Canadian sport, including hockey, entailed a process of inclusions and exclusions. Kidd adds that "while Canadians of every region and background engaged in these practices, it was a very narrow group -- urban, middle-class males of British background --that succeeded in controlling the emergence of what became Canadian sports" (15). That this was also true of hockey is borne out by Gruneau and Whitson who note that, while initially hockey developed more or less spontaneously[4] from "different stick and ice games"(35) including "hurley, ricket, shinny and an ice version of field hockey"(35), it too was influenced by the aforementioned "powerful British public-school sensibility that stressed the role of 'manly games' as necessary training for the young gentlemen of an emergent gentry class"(41). Canada was a British colony, effectively until the end of the Second World War, and many values and attitudes inherited from Great Britain remained hegemonic for a remarkably long time.

In keeping with the preoccupations of Matthew Arnold, there was a perceived need to morally improve the lower orders, to neutralise them politically, and to structure their leisure time in socially harmless ways. Both impulses contributed to the organisation of hockey into clubs, and later, leagues. This meant that, while nearly everyone could participate in these "stick and ice games," they did not do so as equals. Gruneau and Whitson note that:

> Although many of these early game-contests brought together people from different classes, races, or ethnic groups....their cultural meanings were defined through the class, ethnic, gender, and racial prejudices of the time. This was

> evident in practices such as the awarding of trophies for "gentlemen" and the offer of cash prizes for everyone else. (40)

This institutionalization of hockey tended to codify already-existing ideas about the nature of the game, including who should control it, and who could participate in it. For instance, in 1873, one Montreal club gave the following definition of an amateur:

> One who has never competed in any open competition or for public money, or for admission money, or with professionals for a prize, public money, or admission money, nor has ever, at any period of his life taught or assisted in the pursuit of Athletic exercises as a means of livelihood, *or is a laborer or an Indian.* (Gruneau and Whitson 47, emphasis added)

Women were also marginalised: Gruneau and Whitson's explanation for this is that "the obsession with manliness that under pinned the culture of gentlemanly amateurism effectively kept women, and especially working-class women, on the sidelines" (48).

They add that "there is evidence that women began to play hockey in substantial numbers in the 1890s"(48). If this is the case, they did so informally and therefore invisibly. Also "for working-class and immigrant men, 'the most fundamental constraint on working-class recreation was work itself'. They toiled long hours in exhausting, often unsafe conditions" (Rosenweig 43, quoted in Kidd 24-25). Kidd concludes that "on the whole the best [sports] programs were located in middle-class men's organizations in the large prosperous cities" (25). There were regional disparities as well, since "up until the First World War, few of the national [sports] organizations extended beyond Montreal and southern Ontario" (25).

In short, not everyone who played the game represented the game symbolically. Hockey during this period was identified with the figure of the white male (more–or-less gentlemanly; more-or-less virile) athlete. Furthermore, production and consumption occurred in a largely unmediated way and at virtually the same moment. The distance between people who played and people who watched was minuscule (often they were the same people). There were no audiences *as such,* and if there were fans, they were called something else.

Hockey as Socially Constructed Discourse:

In his well-known *Paris-Match* magazine cover example (*Mythologies* 116) Roland Barthes explains how an image which at the first (or denotative) level of signification means simply that a black soldier is saluting the French flag, at a second (or connotative) level becomes a statement about French imperialism in Africa. For Barthes, it is this "second level" of signification that allows for the construction of what he terms "myths." In "Encoding/Decoding," Stuart Hall invokes Barthes to show that a sweater may (but rarely does) mean just a "warm woolly garment" but can also connote "autumn" or even "a romantic walk in the woods on a chilly day" (Barthes, qtd. In Hall 133). Whenever we write, speak, or even think, we are using language, and language is always saturated with more than obvious or literal meanings. Another important thing to remember about visual or verbal signs is that they involve a process of representation. The word "hockey" and the concept "hockey" are not the game itself, but rather ways of representing it. In "The Work of Representation," Hall also emphasises that representations are systematised as *discourses* a term that owes much to the works of Michel Foucault:

> By 'discourse' Foucault meant a 'group of statements which provide a language for talking about -- a way of representing the knowledge about-- a particular topic at a particular historical moment....Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about...it also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others. Just as discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic...by definition it 'rules out', limits, and restricts other ways of talking...of constructing knowledge. (44)

According to Storey, Foucault's notion of discourse is a productive one because it "shifts the focus of attention away from what ...[signs] are about to the 'function' they serve to the producers and consumers of [cultural] myths" (CTPC 94). Also, as Pierre Bourdieu makes clear, in the case of sport, this production and consumption does not take place in a social vacuum , but rather within a relatively autonomous system of:

> ...institutions and agents, directly or indirectly linked to the existence of sporting activities and entertainments [including]public or private "sports associations," whose function is to represent and defend the interests of the practititioners of a given sport and to draw up and impose the standards governing that activity, the producers and vendors of goods (equipment ...special clothing, etc.) and services required to pursue the sport (teachers, instructors, trainers, sports doctors, sports journalists etc.)... (SCC 358)

As Foucault points out, discourses create "a set of possible positions for a subject" (108); offering us some identities (which we may or may not embrace) while foreclosing others. Advocates of psychoanalytic approaches to identity construction would argue that this process of "interpellation " (to borrow an Althusserian term) takes place without our conscious knowledge, "behind our backs" as it were. While I would never deny that there is a significant, indeed profound, unconscious dimension to subject formation, I prefer a more Gramscian approach, one which focuses on the aspects of identity construction that are conscious and actively contestable:

> Gramsci's theory of hegemony grants resistance a far more important role than does Althusser's theory of ideology. Briefly, hegemony may be defined as that process whereby the subordinate are led to consent to the system that subordinates them…Hegemony's "victories" are never final, and any society will evidence numerous points where subordinate groups have resisted …and have withheld their consent to the system. (Fiske TC 40-41)

This struggle between hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourses is made possible by the polysemic nature of cultural texts *as interpreted by socially situated readers*. For instance, if we look at the television program *Hockey Night in Canada* and ask how it constructs the identity of the hockey fan, even a novice viewer will likely see that Don Cherry -- advocate of "Rock 'em, Sock 'em" hockey -- invites us to be one kind of fan, whereas his whimsical "side-kick" Ron MacLean urges us to be quite another. Admittedly, we are constrained by the scope of the repertoire i.e. there may be only a limited range of possibilities available to us at a given point in time (discourses, as Foucault wisely saw, police themselves). However, we can still, to some degree, participate in the construction of our identities as fans --up to and including making the decision to be non-fans. As with any aspect of the ongoing debate between the relative determinations of social structure vs. human agency, we need to resist one-sided polarities and always try to "think the two together."

Conclusion:

As we have seen above, it was not really possible, even a hundred years ago, to speak of hockey as simply a "game played with sticks on ice." Even then, because hockey, and sports generally, also involved other meanings ("fair play," "gentlemanly habits") it could be deployed as a socialising agent as well as a recreational activity. Today, in an era of mass media and mass markets, the discourse of hockey is one in which an increasing variety of representations either replaces or enhances the actual experiences of playing/watching hockey. Even participants are part of an audience; NHL players watch videos of their own and other teams' performances on a regular basis. They also read sports columns and attend games they themselves are not playing in. As well, our notions of what constitutes participation have changed; we now include hockey pools, table hockey, hockey video games, collecting hockey trivia, writing plays, poems and PhD theses about hockey, etc. We have also come to recognise that spectatorship -- once dismissed as merely vicarious -- is a legitimate form of participation (as we shall discuss in a later chapter). The boundaries are blurred here too, since in some instances the audience has the power to effect, not only the nature of representations of the game, but even the game itself. Frank Manning's comment regarding the centrality of sport is, I think, without peer:

> In his classic study of cricket, *Beyond a Boundary,* C.L.R. James expressed his perpetual wonderment for a sport "that could encompass so much of social reality and still remain a game."...other sports [also have] this powerful

> endowment, the capacity to reflect and reveal society at the same time that they shape and sensitize it, without losing their appearance as a "mere" pastime or, rather more cynically, as a form of mass entertainment that provides bread for the few and circuses for the many. Popular culture scholars would do well to spend less time in the faculty common room and more at the stadium.
>
> (Manning17)

Sport, including hockey, *is* culture and, as such, is inextricably bound up with our notions of identity.

Notes to Chapter I

[1] (Kidd 5)

[2] In his *L'histoire du Hockey au Québec* Donald Guay is critical of "les affirmations les plus fantastiques ont été avancées sur l'origine antique du Hockey"(20). The fact that the Persians and ancient Greeks played games "qui consiste à pousser et frappé une balle avec un bâton" (21) does not, in his view, mean that they were playing hockey. Others, however, including *Hockey Night in Canada's* original play-by-play man, Foster Hewitt, made such claims.

[3] De Coubertin drew on triumphal odes written to celebrate athletic events by the poet Pindar (518-438 BCE) (*Grolier Interactive Encyclopedia).*

[4] There are competing arguments about the "birthplace" of Canadian hockey. Some argue Kingston, Ontario, while others quote Thomas Chandler Haliburton to support the claim that hockey was first played on Long Pond in Windsor, Nova Scotia (McFarlane 2). According to Guay, "la toute première joute de hockey à être jouée à Montreal" (37). Guay's position is supported by a recent (Spring 2002) ruling from the International Ice Hockey Federation, who declared hockey to have officially originated in Montreal, at the Victoria Skating Rink, in 1875.

CHAPTER II. Lost Horizons

"It is not down on any map; true places never are"[1]

-Herman Melville

In the previous chapter, my focus was on how sport in general – and hockey in particular—is constructed discursively as a cultural artefact. We also looked briefly at the ways in which sport was deployed to perform certain functions within differing historical and social contexts, noting some of the exclusions and contestations that were involved. We noted that identities are also constructed discursively rather than being the "natural"expressions of innate essences. However, as noted in the Introduction, a connection has been asserted between the game of hockey, and membership in an imagined community called Canada. This means that there is another context that must considered; one that is constituted by debates surrounding the troubled legacy of European nationalism, the weakening of national boundaries produced by globalisation, and the ongoing questions about the value of Canadian cultural nationalisms as a means of resisting the cultural hegemony of the United States

Writing on the Irish attempts at decolonisation, Declan Kiberd notes that, for James Joyce, Ireland was "just another of those modern places where there is no *there* anymore"(85). Although I am a Canadian, and not a citizen of Ireland, I find that this statement resonates for me in a number of ways. Canadians have always struggled with the problem of location. There is, of course, Northrop Frye's famous question "where is here?" (every "here" is posited on the possibility of a "there") as well as the preoccupation of many Canadian writers, particularly of the mid-to-late 20th Century, with "a sense of place."[2] Robert Kroetsch, for example, asserts that to answer "how …we fit in our time and place is a simple necessity" (55) while Michael Greenstein describes Jewish-Canadian writers as "third solitudes reaching out to connect cultures from a lost semitic world" (206). But really, the key word in Kiberd's remark is not "there" but rather "modern," not only because Joyce was supremely a writer of High Modernism, but also because for Joyce, as well as for other expatriates, a certain kind of cosmopolitanism was the ideal.

Nationalisms and Globalisation:

Many argue that because nations themselves are to some extent the products of Enlightenment modernity, and because of the "imaginary " nature of their boundaries, they are, in fact, far more cosmopolitan than were earlier, supposedly more"organic" communities (Hall CCN 10-11). Gellner posits the nationalist narrative as embodying the struggle between liberal, Kantian, universalising nationalism which suppresses difference and speaks in terms of "societies" rather than "communities," and "the romantic reaction to this" (Gellner 3):

> Romantic philosophy provided the conceptual tools for nationalism: man should not be the universal exemplar of Manchester commercialism or Versailles classicism but rather he should find himself in his *roots*, and roots communicated by sentiment not reasoning. So nationalism took over the imagery of community. (Gellner 4)

European Romanticism's goal was a (kinder, gentler) "Herderian form of nationalism opposed to an arrogant, confident, universalism" (Gellner 5) which would, at the same time, create "a shared place in the sun for local distinctive cultures" (5). However, there is also danger lurking in certain kinds of "connectedness," and Gellner cautions that taken to extremes it, too, can turn against "the people -- or at least those not bound by 'shared roots and authentic sentiments' " (4). "The obverse of this populist nationalism is the condition of being *déraciné* the exclusion not merely from nationality but from humanity" [3](Gellner 5). This sentiment is echoed by Julia Kristeva who, writing from the standpoint of a citizen of France rather than as a displaced Bulgarian national, asserts that "the cult of origins is a hate reaction. Hatred of others who do not share my origins and who affront me personally, economically, and culturally" (NWN 3).

According to Gellner, even today "the theoretical understanding of nationalism is an open and contentious field in which there is little that is firmly established" (7). Certainly, in the last few hundred years nationalisms have been forces for both colonization and decolonization (Hall CCN 355) and nation states have provided, and continue to provide, the institutional "machinery" for both democratic and totalitarian political systems. Notoriously, and all too often, nations have asserted their differences externally while at the same time suppressing differences internally. Increasingly, as the complex phenomenon known as "globalisation" sweeps the world, political and economic arguments arise as to the legitimacy and value of nationalistic sentiments and even whether nation states can --or should -- continue to exist. Stuart Hall takes "the long view" on this debate. He reminds us that:

> Globalization, drawing more and more of the globe into the net of the global capitalist market, is, of course, no recent, post-'Big Bang' phenomenon. It has been going on since the Spanish and the Portuguese initiated the West's 'encounter' with the Rest at the end of the fifteenth century. (Hall CCN 353)

He adds, "the engine of this expansionist history was the European nation-state, with its well-defined territorial boundaries, national economies, and increasingly national cultures" (CCN 353). This is not, however, to say that globalisation in the twenty-first century is "the same as" it was in the fifteenth. Today "the paradigmatic experience ...for most people is that of staying in one place" but experiencing -- through "the penetration of global forces and networks" --"the dis-placement that global modernity brings to them" (Morley HT 14-15). We've run out of uncharted territory and today, globalisation turns inward rather than outward:

> ...the present intensified phase of globalization has favoured the tendencies pushing nation-states towards supranational integration -- economic, and more reluctantly, political and cultural: weakening without destroying the nation-state and thereby opening up local and regional economies both to new dislocations and to new relationships. (Hall CCN 354)

Many of these same tensions and contradictions intersect in the space known as Canada. As an example of a so-called "settler colony," the varied inhabitants of the geographical areas that later united under an Indian name [4] were subjected to the colonisation(s) of the euphemistically-labelled "Mother Countries" (first France, then England) while at the same time creating the preconditions for "internal colonies" (e.g. of First Nations people and Québécois). While nominally at least Canada achieved the status of nation in 1867, and ceased being a dominion of the British Empire with the passage of the Statutes of Westminster in 1931, many argue that, from the second half of the Twentieth Century, Canada has been, and continues to be, both an economic and a cultural colony of the United States of America:

> In the 1990s tensions still underlie the diplomatically friendly and economically close relationship between Canada and the USA. Disputes have flared up recently over such questions as tariffs, salmon stocks and market access ... in no social sector, however, are the boundary lines greater than in matters affecting culture. (New B 37)

Also, as Bodroghkozy astutely observes, despite 19th century economic nationalist ventures such as the building of the CPR, and later (1930s) the establishment of a national broadcasting system, "at the close of the 20th Century, it would be hard to argue that the Canadian project of creating a viable imagined community has been an unqualified success" (Bodroghkozy 1).

Leaving in abeyance the question as to whether or not, in Canada's case, a strong sense of national identity is desirable or even possible, one can only speculate on the difficulties of constructing one, under the less than ideal conditions described above. Certainly, what it means to be "Canadian" has been a source of anxiety for many, but the struggle --if not for self-determination then at least for self-definition -- has not taken place in isolation. Speaking of the rebellions of 1837, John Ralston Saul reminds us that " these small battles in small colonies were, in fact, identical to those going on in the rest of the western world' (25). Few would argue about the impact that two world wars -- started by Others, Elsewhere --had on Canada's population and national mythologies. The following passage from *Two Solitudes* is a paean to the birth of a nation:

> …even as the two race-legends woke again remembering ancient enmities, there woke with them also the felt knowledge that together they had fought and survived one great war they had never made and that now they had entered another…and almost grudgingly, out of the instinct to do what was necessary, the country took the first irrevocable steps toward becoming herself.
>
> (MacLennan 370)

MacLennan's vision is consistent with the fact that one often hears the truism "Canada came of age as a result of Vimy Ridge."

Today, globalisation, a crisis of a different order, is also affecting Canada, dividing us internally while tying us more closely to a world (Morley HT 124) beyond our borders:

> Europe is seeking to integrate its economy and its political and administrative machinery, and thereby reduce the traditional sovereignty of the states that make up Europe. In North America, we have moved from a Canada-US Free Trade Agreement to a North American Free Trade Agreement…that is eventually supposed to expand to include the other states in the Western Hemisphere. Economic globalization not only means continental and regional economic blocs, but also the dominance of multinational corporations and the free flow of capital…without much concern for national boundaries. National states are told (and believe) that they must make their national economies "competitive"…. Protecting their own industries, and their own citizens, from the shocks of

> external competition, is no longer considered desirable, or even feasible. (Whitaker 123-124)

The question, for many, becomes whether or not "in a postmodern landscape characterized by heterogeneity, multiple and fluid identities, blurred boundaries and the globalization of culture, it is useful even to ask …about specific national configurations" (Bodroghkozy 2). Certainly, as Graeme Turner reminds us, economic globalisation has cultural consequences:

> The ease with which some globalising culture industries have crossed national boundaries, pay TV in Europe for instance, has lent considerable empirical weight to such propositions. Consequently, they have been taken up by many communication theorists in Europe, America and Australia who regard the acceleration of the processes of globalisation within the media as paradigmatic of a new economic and political order. (Turner MIN 120)

The (Great Canadian) Cultural Nationalism Debate:

For Turner, the theorist who exemplifies this trend is Richard Collins and, having read Collins' influential Culture, *Communication and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television*, I concur with Turner's assessment. In his preface, Collins is dismissive of cultural nationalism, making the claim that "Canada's political stability, its successful integration of the 'third force', its social peace and decency have, I believe followed not from a strong national culture, but from a weak one"…(xiv). This may well be the case, but what is less clear is whether this is in spite of --or because of-- the role played by national cultural policies and institutions. It is impossible to somehow "subtract" the effects of initiatives resulting from the Massey

Commission or decades of CBC broadcasting, NFB film-making, Canada Council funding, CRTC regulations, etc. from what we presently experience as Canadian culture. However Collins has other objections to cultural nationalism which are also linked with his allegiance to free-market globalisation. Referring specifically to public broadcasting, he asserts that:

> The preference of audiences for the "American" (whether or not made in the United States) products, gratifications and values often denied them by a paternalistic state testifies that the imperfections in the broadcasting market are not exclusively confined to the for-profit and advertising-financed sectors and to a patrician current of elitism and oppressive earnestness in the public sector. (29)

Collins also appears to think that the only thing that prevents Canadians from becoming successful international "niche marketers" of specialised programming is regressive "cultural nationalist" broadcasting policy (13). This may be true for some Canadian businesses, but it remains unclear as to how such a lack of "cultural free trade" is injurious to the public at large. As well as dismissing regulatory bodies as impediments to successful integration into the global marketplace, Collins uncritically accepts the argument that there is a link between "the pressures of competition and the market"(29) and attentiveness to popular taste on the part of advertisers and private producers of cultural commodities.

The charge that publically-funded cultural institutions are "elitist" can be traced back to Raymond Williams' criticism of the BBC, in his 1962 book entitled *Communications.* Here Williams is objecting to what he sees as the BBC's attempt to indoctrinate the public into an upper-middle-class view of capital-C "Culture."(He is also reacting to "Leavis-ism" which I discussed in the previous Chapter.) It is, of course, true that state-controlled national media play a role --often a mandated one-- in constructing national identities, and that historically this has involved privileging certain ideas and images about identity and downplaying or excluding others (Morley HT 105-107).

This argument also relies on what I consider to be a misreading of Pierre Bourdieu's influential work *Distinctions*:

> We see that…the (sociologically well-founded) illusion of "natural distinction" is ultimately based on the power of the dominant to impose…a definition of excellence which, being nothing other than their own way of existing, is bound to appear…both arbitrary (since it is one among others) and perfectly necessary, absolute and natural. (Bourdieu 255)

Certainly, the mainstream media tend to re/present the ideas and values of the powerful far more readily and frequently than they do those of the marginalised. But it is worth remembering that Williams was *not* advocating market-driven corporate controlled broadcasting as an alternative to the BBC, but rather some system of plural, community-based "grass-roots" networks. Nor, at least to my knowledge, does Pierre Bourdieu suggest that privately produced and marketed culture is somehow "less elitist" than its state-supported counterpart.

These dual assertions, first that Canadian culture does not appeal to Canadian audiences, and second that the private sector is more "responsive" to cultural taste, also rest on a set of assumptions about the processes of cultural consumption [5] which are glossed over in Collins account. However, as Bodroghkozy points out, his claim is backed up by Nielsen ratings:

> Statistics on anglo-Canadian television viewing seem to bear out Richard Collins' assertion that Canadian programming carries a 'cultural discount' among indigenous viewers…An A. C. Nielsen survey of the top twenty most watched programmes broadcast on the CBC and the private CTV and GLOBAL networks in English Canada for the 1994-95 season appear to support the argument. With one notable exception[6], the top ten programmes were all American comedies and dramas (2)

The complex nature of popularity and audience preferences is left unproblematised. Collins does not address the difficulties involved in measuring popularity (through ratings, or through polls and surveys, etc.) nor does he ask how -- since presumably they are not innate in our "taste" genes-- preferences and gratifications are constituted.

Collins also appears to see commercial interests as flexible and complaisant -- ever-willing to tailor their agendas in order to meet the needs of the consuming public (51). But surely this is one sided, since advertisers are --at least as much if not more-- proactive than reactive, expending a good deal of time, talent, and money, on attempts to reshape popular tastes in order to sell more products. How well they actually *succeed* is a separate question, since Stuart Hall's famous comment that "ordinary people are not cultural dopes" (DP 232) is, in my opinion, true. However, if we are to believe Richard Collins, it is only *publically sponsored and supported* paternalistic cultural elites who -- because "father knows best" --attempt to manipulate audiences. Commercial broadcasters, on the other hand, merely "aim to please."

The final reason Collins advances as to why Canadians should stop trying to 'protect' a national culture is that it is our political institutions that actually define our identities rather than cultural ones:

> My own view is that political institutions are more important than television and culture, or even language, in producing and reproducing a solid sentiment of national identity among Canadians. (329)

To some extent this is his most persuasive argument, except that it is posited on an extremely narrow definition of culture. Political institutions are established and sustained by societies-- citizens and their elected representatives who live in and through symbolic cultural practices: "Culture is not [merely] a series of objects or texts, it is a dynamic process of making and becoming" (Storey CCEL xii). What is more, while he concedes that the "assertion that any of the complex phenomena and relations that have been my concern are unicausal would be foolish" (329), Collins nevertheless concludes with the (to me extraordinary) statement that "democratic political institutions may survive in robust health without those who control them and are ruled through them sharing a national symbolic culture" (343). In his view this contradicts "the correspondence among communications, culture, and political structure argued by Innis" (343). Again we are offered impossible choices: either culture is completely and mechanically "determined" by politics and economics (an over-reading of Innis [7]) or it is severed from them completely.

Collins also objects to what he sees as the "pessimism" of Canadian cultural nationalisms. Following Collins' lead, others (Manning; Gilbert; Wernick; Rutherford) divide approaches to Canadian culture into two opposing camps (i.e.the "optimistic" and the "pessimistic" -- usually privileging the former and dismissing the latter). According to Bodroghkozy, pessimism results from the fact that "left media analysis has largely been dominated by a 'political economy' paradigm heavily influenced by the work of Canadian economic historian Harold Innis ...in this argument, Canada is an economic and cultural dependent of the United States" (3). (Dallas Smythe is another pessimist (3) as is the "gloomy" David Taras (8)). Collins is unrelenting in his criticism of this "dependency theory" in which "Canadian interests have systematically been subordinated to those of successive dominant metropoles" (160) and trade is viewed as "a zero-sum game"(162). His response, on page 162, is to paint a rosy picture of the Canadian economy and later to advance the Pratt-Richards thesis that -- *contra* Innis -- resource-based economies are really a Good Thing[8]. Despite her apparent acceptance of aspects of Collins' analysis, Bodroghkozy warns that "while it is currently fashionable to criticize the economic determinism and totalizing nature of these arguments, they cannot be dismissed entirely. It does *matter* that mass communications outlets are being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands as transnational conglomerates...oligopolize the media" (4, emphasis in text).

But in Collins' view, cultural pessimists are guilty of more than their dogged insistence that we not gloss over what they consider to be the political and economic realities. He and others also take issue with the fact that "much of Canadian elite cultural discourse persists in privileging a notion of Canada as 'Landscape', 'Weather', 'Wilderness'...the Great White North is either empty of human presence or constantly victimizes its puny human settlers" (Bodroghkozy 9). This "garrison mentality" we owe to the negative pronouncements of Susanna Moodie, Farley Mowat (?), Gaile

McGregor, and the Frye/ Atwood axis. (So much for our --irredeemably dreary --literary tradition!) Indeed, for Collins, Gaile[9] McGregor appears to symbolise the *mortmain* of High Culture's nationalistic elitism (for Collins, nationalism is by definition elitist and vice versa) and he criticises her for generalising from High Culture to all culture (256).

Collins argues that Canadian cultural policy is controlled by a small clique of (presumably Toronto-based) "intellectuals who project the image of their own class onto the social classes above and below them"(189). And, while he concedes that "few now share Adam Smith's faith in the ability of the invisible hand to engineer a perfect symmetry of private with public interests" (Collins xi) he nonetheless devotes an entire chapter (suggestively titled "Maximizing Satisfaction") to the market paradigm and opines that while the market is not a perfect solution it does "offer a powerful critique of public broadcasting and the state's role in Canadian broadcasting"(159). But, as I pointed out earlier, Collins is guilty of several conflations and elisions. "State-funded" can, but doesn't necessarily, equate to "elitist," and "commercially sucessful" doesn't always mean "democratic" (and Collins himself acknowledges this when he comments that " it cannot be assumed that established broadcasting services deliver an optimal repertoire of programming to satisfy viewer demands" (155)).

According to Raboy arguments regarding the supposed domination of Canadian culture by the Canada Council, the CRTC, the CBC, et al. overlook two important points: The first is that politicians (who control the purse-strings and who are subject to lobbying from various interest groups, including those, such as the National Citizens' Coalition, who oppose to state interventions at virtually all levels) do not always act on the recommendations of royal commissions. The second is that whatever else "national identity" may be, it's only partly the result of "architectural design." We can-- and personally, I think we should -- establish policies and support public institutions that create a space in which culture can flourish-- but we cannot anticipate or control what that "culture" will look like. Some even argue that, not only is there no necessary contradiction between cultural pluralities and national identity, in the case of Canada at least, national identity *is* plural (i.e. multicultural).

My final objection to Collins' apparent belief that cultural nationalism is something that has been imposed, from the "top-down," on an unsuspecting public, is that it flies in the face of the massive popularity of, and nationalist identifications with, the game of hockey. Admittedly, Canadians are the products of decades of exposure, via the CBC, to *Hockey Night in Canada,* which remains one of the most popular television programmes in the country. Still, to suggest that our love of hockey is nothing more than the result of clever social engineering on the part of elitist nationalists is surely to suggest that the fans in question really are "cultural dopes," an explanation which is now generally considered to be theoretically impoverished.

Ironies, Ambiguities, and "Reversible Resistance":

Collins is one example only; what of other perspectives on Canadian popular culture? To some extent the optimism/pessimism debate continues in the pages of *The Beaver Bites Back? American Popular Culture in Canada* edited by David Flaherty and the late Frank Manning. Here, Collins finds some support for his charges against pessimistic cultural nationalism: "I challenge the assumption that Canada is a passive receptacle for the phallocentric domination of American culture….Margaret Atwood is among those who have been persuaded by it and she used the theme explicitly in her 1987 testimony before a parliamentary committee on free trade" (Manning 4). Manning et al. argue that although Canadians are subjected to the "aggressive power of American popular culture"(4), this does not mean that we "take it lying down"(4). While he overstates the position of Atwood and other "pessimistic hegemony/dependency" theorists, unlike Collins, Manning supports his optimistic stance with a Fiskean analysis that sees the process of cultural consumption as potential resistant. He summarises:

> Canadians import and eagerly consume American products but reconstitute and recontextualize them in ways representative of what consciously, albeit ambivalently, distinguishes Canada from its powerful neighbour: state capitalism, social democracy, middle-class morality, regional identities, official multiculturalism, the True North, the parliamentary system, institutionalized compromise, international neutrality, and so on. The result is a made-in-Canada popular culture, played primarily to Canadian audiences, but exported to the United States in ways that complete an ironic pattern of reciprocity. (Manning 8)

These truisms may not be entirely accurate, but they are nonetheless what we believe about ourselves --or, at least what we *say* we believe about ourselves --our oft-repeated national apocrypha. (Recall the *As It Happens* examples in the Introduction: a "Constitution of Canadians," a "Blizzard of Canadians" etc.).

The Beaver Bites Back also includes several articles (a whole section in fact) on sport. Hockey is not dwelt on (presumably it's "too Canadian") but baseball

(Rutherford, Barney) football (Stebbins) and Olympic sport (MacAloon) are. In summarising their commonalities, Frank Manning notes that:

> In a sense the central themes of the baseball and football essays are implied in MacAloon's discussion of Olympic sport culture...Canadians...are doubly ambivalent about themselves and the American Other...[thus] they construct a collective identity and sense of national purpose that constitute a double fiction: *Canadians cannot achieve it, except in the field of sport*; Americans do not recognize it ...(Manning 17 emphasis added)

In a refreshing refusal to conflate and elide (à la Collins), Wernick cautions us that "the issue of Canada's Americanization has to be disentangled from that of its commodification" (296). Also, while Wernick dismisses George Grant, Northrop Frye and Gaile McGregor as "romantic," "essentialist," and "ghosts who continue to flap around," unlike Collins he does not dismiss what he sees as more nuanced nationalist arguments raised by Lyons, Stebbins, Feldman et al:

> First....differences between Canadian and American forms are referred to the specifics of social and historical context rather than reduced to matters of an identitarian and differential national subjectivity. Second, where attempts are made to depict Canadian and American differences in the model of a full-blooded cultural contrast...the essentialist move is checked by the deconstructive way it is done. (Wernick 297)

Wernick also reminds us that:

> just as the Frankfurt School's critique of "mass culture" tended to emphasize its top-down and ideological character at the expense of what people actually make of

> it, the new term "popular culture" is associated with approaches that can one-sidedly do the reverse. (301)

In raising this and other concerns in a clear and balanced way, a decade after its publication *The Beaver Bites Back* remains an interesting exploration of the pros, cons and possibilities of national popular culture.

Understandably, cultural studies theorisings about the relationship between hockey and Canadian identity reflect an awareness of the competing approaches discussed above. Gruneau and Whitson, for example, commenting on the Frankfurt School/mass culture analysis, point out that:

> Writers in this tradition tend to believe passionately that people living in so-called mass cultures have the capacity, indeed the duty, to become more than they are. But in their desire to help people break out of the bonds of delusion and false consciousness, critics have sometimes slipped into an implicitly patronizing view of the very people they want to liberate. (21)

This is where the "cultural dopes" theme originated, and Gruneau and Whitson clearly identify its limitations, including the lack of "a precise political or ideological fit between sport as a mass-culture product and the values of sports fans" (23).

> There is no reason why it is not possible to be both a radical trade unionist and a follower of the Montreal Canadiens. Nor is it impossible to be a Canadian nationalist and harbour affection for the Los Angeles Kings[10] or the Boston Bruins. (23)

Gruneau and Whitson identify four "distinct tendencies in Canadian cultural criticism"(25). The first is to dismiss mass/popular culture altogether: "The unwillingness of many Canadian intellectuals to take hockey seriously stems from the prevalence of this position" (25). The second is "to romanticize the game as it existed in the past and compare this idealized past with the apparent corruption of the present"(25). The third is to argue for "an organic connection with the national psyche" (25) and the fourth involves a failure to recognise that commercial spectacles are subject to varying interpretations on the part of plural audiences. In commenting on what they see as the romantic and essentialist perspectives of Kidd and McFarlane, Beardsley, and Gzowski, they observe that:

> These arguments are provocative, but in our view it is wrong to base the discussion on an idealized, organic conception of hockey as a natural Canadian cultural resource, something that developed almost magically out of an exposure to ice, snow and open spaces (26).

Like Wernick, Gruneau and Whitson stress that, analytically, it is imperative to disentangle the issue of commercialisation from that of Americanisation, adding that "profiting from the game has been as Canadian as the beaver"(27) a claim that is borne out by, among others, Cruise and Griffiths in *Net Worth: Exploding the Myths of Pro Hockey*. What is needed instead, they contend, is an analysis of how "the different uses of hockey have blended together in complex ways" (27) via an approach that focuses on "the close relationship that has always existed between culture and power" (27).

Clearly, Gruneau and Whitson's aim is demystification. They intend to purge us of the fantasies and fetishes that circulate about "Our Game"(Beardsley), "The Game of Our Lives" (Gzowksi) and the immanent "Death of Hockey" (Kidd & McFarlane).

But while they accurately identify certain notions about hockey as romantic and essentialist, and while their criticisms are both temperate and balanced, they do not address the seemingly inexplicable persistence of this tendency to idealise what is, after all, "only a game." Fair enough; this is not their project. Like John Ralston Saul, they are concerned with contrasting myth with truth, and not with exploring the *raisons d'êtres* of the myths themselves. Perhaps their most forceful criticism of Beardsley et al. is that they use "idealized cultural forms and practices as a basis for criticism" (27). It *is* important to recognise that myths are myths. However, *pace* Gruneau and Whitson, I think that it is equally important to recognise that myths are also "real," that is to say, that they have genuine emotive power and the capacity to define and shape our cultures[11] if we (consciously or otherwise) believe in them. As journalist John Lanchester recently put it (in referance to the World Cup of soccer) "there are no atheists on sofas" (*London Review of Books* July 11 2002). For better or worse, the imaginary connection between hockey and Canadian identity continues to be part of our national mythology.

Conclusion: The Return of the (nationalist) Repressed

Canadian and Quebecois nationalisms of the 1960s were, in large part, a reaction to perceived dominance of the US over the politics, economics, and cultures of Canada. In the case of the latter (Quebec) there was also the dominance of "English" Canada and, internally, a repressive parochialism (Shek 45). *Vis-à-vis* our (putative) "national psyche" the claim has been made that "Canadians' 'pragmatic, localized, episodic and fluid' sense of themselves and their culture needs an 'absolute, forceful, and mystified Other' for useful comparison" (Bodroghkozy 7). Also, the political economy based dominance arguments, despite the fall from fashion noted above, still have some credibility. What is more, they may well have new life breathed into them by the triumphalist consolidation of American hegemony on a global scale and, closer to home, the aftereffects of a decade of NAFTA.

As before, nationalisms cannot be viewed in isolation. Perhaps this is even more the case today when, as David Morley notes:

> The destabilisations of the postmodern period have certainly engendered a variety of defensive and reactionary responses: witness the rise of various forms of "born again" nationalism, accompanied both by sentimentalised reconstructions of a variety of "authentic" localised "heritages" and by xenophobia directed at newcomers, foreigners or outsiders. (Morley HT 194)

Similarly, Stuart Hall identifies both "ascending" (e.g. in Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia) and "descending" nationalisms "locked in a kind of combined and uneven double helix"[12] and cautions that "'ascending' small nationalisms can often take the form of trying to construct ethnically (or culturally, religiously or racially) closed or 'pure' formations in the place of the older corporate nation-states or imperial formations"(CCN 355). *Plus ça change*! Once again we see the potential dark side of "blood and earth" nationalism, an old demon dressed in new clothes.

Does this mean that we are caught between the Scylla of globalisation, invariably represented in the dominant discourse as "good" (or at least "inevitable") and the Charybdis of eternally recurring negative nationalism(s)? This is a dichotomy that Hall side-steps but he raises two points that I think are central to how we might productively think about nationalisms. Firstly, he echoes Benedict Anderson and emphasises that nationalism is not an "essence" but rather a "symbolic formation":

> ...a 'system of representation' -- which produced an 'idea' of the nation as an 'imagined community', with whose meanings we could identify and which, through this imaginary identification, constituted its citizens as 'subjects; (in both Foucault's sense of 'subjection' -- subject of and subjected to the nation). (CCN 355)

The disintegration of this "imagined unity," Hall argues, creates the space for previously subsumed "differences" to assert themselves[13].

Hall's second point has to do with the ways that nationalisms are articulated with other "traditions, discourses, and forces" (CNN 355). For Hall, it is important to recognise that "nationalism is not only *not* a spent force; it isn't necessarily either a reactionary or a progressive force[14] politically" (CNN 355, emphasis in text). This point is corroborated by Morley who, following Doreen Massey, speculates that "it is, in fact possible, if we approach the question differently, 'for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking'"(Massey cited in Morley HT 194). Similarly Kristeva stresses that we should not "reject the idea of the nation in a gesture of willful universalism" but rather "modulate its less repressive aspects (NWN 7). Graeme Turner also takes up this theme, reminding us that "it is not so much nationalism *per se* but the uses to which it is put in specific instances" (MIN 120) that we should be concerned about. He adds that:

> My view of the standard case against nationalism is that its assumptions about the political potential of the idea of the nation are too simple. I'm not alone in

> this. Tom Nairn argues that one of the consequences of what he calls the 'demonisation' of nationalism is the erasure of its historical relationship with the expansion of democracy and western modernity. (MIN 120)

Finally, according to Homi Bhabha, in postcolonial societies, nationalisms "need not necessarily be conservative" (Bhabha cited in Turner 121).

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, those who consider nationalism irrelevant do so primarily because they believe that today "boundaried" nation states have been swept off the map by the rising tide of globalisation. However Turner, invoking Giddens, also points out that "globalisation has been both dialectical and uneven: the loss of autonomy on the part of some states or groups of states has often gone along with an *increase* in that of others (Turner MIN 121). It would appear that, even though we ought to have "outgrown" our nationalisms and that (in theory at least) they should have disappeared, phenomenally they have not done so. While the dominant discourse insists that we are living in a globalised "post-nationalist" era, on the ground, in the places that Raymond Williams refers to as "rooted settlements" of "lived, worked and placeable social identities" (Williams cited in Hall CCN 58) nationalistic beliefs and attitudes are still a force. It follows, then, that cultural practices, including sport in general and hockey in particular, are as available for deployment in support of nationalist interests as they were in previous periods of history[15].

Notes to Chapter II

[1] (Melville 68)

[2] One needs only to look at the literary history of English Canada to see that "from the earliest narrative of exploration and settlement, to the Confederation period with its awareness of nationhood, to the

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present expressions of a more confident, postcolonial self-awareness, writers have accordingly…made their relationship to place an important element in their writing (Brown et al. xvi). This is not as evident in the case of *Québécois* writers, however.

[3] The classic example, which Gellner points to also, is, of course, anti-Semitism. Recall that the Stalinist label for the Jews was "rootless cosmopolitans."

[4] *Kanata* -- an Iroquois word meaning village.

[5] The question of how culture is consumed and audiences "make meanings" will be discussed in Chapter VII.

[6] The Canadian program in question was *Due South*. For an interesting discussion of this highly popular show see: Hughes, Vanessa. *The Mountie, The Mouse and The Mother Country; Due South and 'Canadian' Culture*. Unpublished MA thesis. University of London, 1999.

[7] And, for that matter, Marx, whose base/superstructure model, while effectively critiqued by some (e.g. Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society)* was never as "economistic" as his opponents have claimed.

[8] One wonders where Pratt et al. were during the late 1980s when world oil prices fell, the Alberta Government declared a royalty holiday, a deficit was born, and subsequently, social programs were scapegoated? See Kevin Taft: *Shredding the Public Interest* for a closer look at this.

[9] Other recent examples include the World Cup of soccer, which was watched by numerous fans, many of whom were immigrants cheering vigorously for their countries of origin.

[10] Well, perhaps not the Los Angeles Kings….

[11] In a later chapter Gruneau and Whitson do acknowledge that "mythic stories can't be reduced to ideology in every instance"(133).

[12] Or, "the figure of the spiral staircase at the Château de Chambord" (Blodgett 17) an altogether more elegant metaphor.

[13] Of course this creates a different set of problems. More on this in the Conclusion.

[14] Hall cites the case of Iraq: "Is Iraqi nationalism progressive because it opposes the West or reactionary because it holds its people in a crude and violent dictatorial grip?" (CCN 355).

[15] Perhaps even more so, in an era of "time/space compression" as David Harvey (240-242) has observed.

Chapter III. Ghostly Imaginings

"Communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[1]

-Benedict Anderson

"It is possible to trace the path which leads from the haunted work to that which haunts it."[2]

-Pierre Macherey

Forearmed with the knowledge that as Benedict Anderson points out, nations too "are cultural artefacts of a particular kind" (4) we can now return to the questions raised in the introduction and, again as Anderson suggests, address ourselves to the style in which hockey, as cultural text, helps us imagine a particular community called Canada. The data strongly suggest that one of the ways we imagine community is through ransacking the past for images and narratives that we can put to work in the present. Sometimes this involves (à la Aeneas) a journey to the Land of the Dead.

Anderson acknowledges the otherworldly nature of trans-historical collective identities when he refers to role that cenotaphs and Tombs of Unknown Soldiers have played in enshrining the idea of the "deep, horizontal comradeship"(7) so necessary to our "ghostly national imaginings"[3](9). Although some ghosts exist purely to frighten their audiences, traditionally they often perform other functions. Some warn the living just in time to avert an impending disaster, while others reproach us for things done, or, left undone. One of literature's more famous ghosts is certainly that of Hamlet's father who will not rest until the wrongs of the past have been righted. This example is a problematic one, insofar as Hamlet's determination to avenge his father's death ends in disaster, but in other canonical instances (e.g. ghosts in Virgil) ghosts are clearly agents of social order and/or advocates of morally appropriate conduct.

Perhaps one of the more thought-provoking characteristics of ghosts is that they are time-travellers. The "dear departed" whom they (literally) re-present belong to the past, yet they are (super-naturally) with us, here and now, in the present. If we, the living, are in danger of forgetting our origins, we can rely on our ghosts to remind us. Ghosts can and do serve as agents of historical memory, and this may account for their presence in narratives about hockey and identity. While some of the texts discussed below are not "ghost stories" in the strict, generic sense of the term, spectres of various kinds appear and reappear, seemingly at will, but never without a textual purpose. The spectres themselves are sometimes presented directly, as "characters" (e.g. in *The Divine Ryans, The Last Season* and "Now I Can Die in Peace") and sometimes as half-remembered dream visions (e.g."King Leary" and "The Return of Aurel Joliet"). *Power Play*, one of two iconically Canadian television series that aired in the nineties, also incorporates (invariably hockey related) ghosts in a manner which exhorts us to remember and emulate the still relevant values of "better days" gone by.

***The Divine Ryans*:**

In each of these texts, links with the past are established in what can be thought of as paranormal, or otherworldly ways. The opening scene of Wayne Johnston's novel, *The Divine Ryans* , takes place in a graveyard, where Aunt Phil announces that yet another family member's house must be sold in order to keep the family-owned newspaper from going out of business. The Ryans, a St. John's Newfoundland commercial dynasty that has gradually fallen on hard times, also own and manage a funeral home:

> All that was left of the empire, except for Aunt Phil's house, was its four corners: *The Chronicle* and the funeral home which we owned, and the orphanage and the convent, which we might as well have owned, given how long somebody named Ryan had been running them.... The only moneymaker in the lot was the funeral home, prompting Uncle Reginald to remark that, from now on, the family motto should be, "We make our living from the dead." (Johnson 2)

It is in this paradoxically comic/gothic context that the principal character, nine-year-old Draper Doyle, comes of age. As might be expected of a normal Canadian lad, Draper Doyle Ryan plays minor hockey. He is a goalie but, alas, not a particularly good one. The framed photo on his bedroom wall tells all:

> At my skates, on the ice just in front of me, lay my nemesis, the puck. The word "puck," my father had once told me, originally meant "demon." For a time it had even been used interchangeably with "hobgoblin." I made a mental note of thanks to that anonymous inventor of hockey who had had the good sense to opt for "puck." (Johnson 3)

Despite his mediocre skills and frequent bouts of performance anxiety, Draper Doyle loves –in fact, worships-- hockey. In any case, he has other, more disturbing, worries. His father has died recently and, ever since, Draper Doyle has been seeing his ghost:

> ...from out of the darkness of the house, he appeared, looking as if he had just come home from work. My father stood at the kitchen sink and looked out the window, at me, it seemed, though he gave no sign that he had seen me. I closed my eyes then opened them to find that a man unmistakably my father was still staring at me....Then he took from his coat pocket what looked like a hockey puck, which he began to toss from hand to hand, his head going back and forth as he followed the flight of the puck....
>
> "Mom," I shouted, "Mom, Dad is in our house. In the kitchen. He's there, I saw him." (Johnson 3-4)

The adults in the family, and even his twelve-year-old sister, view these visitations with scepticism. To them, they are clearly a sign that Draper Doyle has been traumatised by his father's untimely death. Worse still (at least for some of the more religiously orthodox family members) his sightings are downright frivolous. As matriarch Aunt Phil points out, "people came back from the dead to deliver 'messages' or 'warnings' to the living, not just to look at them or 'of all things to throw pucks up in the air'"(Johnston 7).

To cure him of his apparent neurosis, and over his mother's objections, Draper Doyle is forced to give up hockey in favour of a regimen of spiritual and physical hygiene as a member of "Father Seymour's Number." Father Seymour (surname Ryan, in fact, one of Draper Doyle's uncles) manages the orphanage where boys are trained "in the arts of dancing, singing, and least appealing of all (to Draper Doyle) boxing"(14). According to Uncle Reginald, official hearse driver (and unofficial family iconoclast) Father Seymour's youthful proteges could be best characterised as " a cross between the Vienna Boys' Choir and the Hitler Youth" (14).

This cure is infinitely worse than the disease, involving, as it does, unsuccessful attempts at lip-synching on the part of the tone-deaf Draper Doyle. More to the point, it does not work. His father continues to appear to him, always either wearing skates, or carrying a hockey puck:

> The visitations continued....My father appeared about once a week in the yard next door, dressed for winter as if even ghosts could feel the cold. Once I saw him in the middle of the afternoon, a rare daytime appearance. He stood there in the backyard, holding a puck up to the sunlight like some jeweller appraising a stone, staring at it with one eye closed as if he was trying to see through it, trying to see what it was made of.... (102)

Draper Doyle now wisely refrains from mentioning these episodes to the other Ryans, but he continues to find them troubling, in part because he has experienced a memory loss or "black-out" and cannot recall the events immediately preceding and following his father's death: "My 'missing week' Uncle Reginald called it. My father, he insisted, was gone but not forgotten. My missing week, on the other hand, was forgotten but not gone"(8).

As well, Draper Doyle's sleep is often disturbed by recurring nightmares and twice he dreams he is in the Montreal Forum. His second Forum dream is patterned on a "real life" incident, i.e. the death of Howie Morenz[4]:

> That night I dreamed that I was in the Forum, on the ice, standing with Aunt Phil in a line of people who, like us, were wearing street clothes. It might have been

> one of those Depression-era breadlines, for the way that we were dressed and the way that we shuffled forward, heads bowed…It was exactly as Uncle Reginald had once described it to me. Aunt Phil was taking me to see the great Howie Morenz, who was being waked at centre ice....Aunt Phil and I were taking part in one of the greatest moments in Habs history. "Morenz" the crowd kept whispering, "Morenz," I said, as the circle slowly broke to let us in….
>
> "Kiss him," Aunt Phil said. "Kiss the man good-bye." She began to lower me towards the casket….
>
> I looked down to see, not Morenz, but my father, his hair slicked back, a kind of spectral handsomeness about him, my dead father, waiting for a kiss from the one person who could bring him back to life…. (122-124)

It is not altogether surprising, then, that when the climax of the novel finally comes and Draper Doyle's dilemma is resolved, this is accomplished by means of a dream. In the dream, Draper Doyle, urged on by Uncle Reginald, must confront his fears externalised as monsters (a neighbour's doberman is recast as Cerberus) and "lay" his father's ghost. Once again, Draper Doyle stands before his father's coffin, but this time he is not in the Montreal Forum but rather in hell (or some underworld equivalent, located, appropriately enough, in the basement of Reg Ryan's Funeral Home). He is dressed to do battle in his goalie mask and pads, and armed with magic hockey pucks:

> "I don't want to touch him," I said. "I'm not touching him."
>
> "You don't have to," said Uncle Reginald. "Just use the pucks."
>
> "What?" I said.

> "The pucks," he said. "Put them on his eyes."
>
> I reached into my pads and took out the two remaining pucks.
>
> "Put them on his eyes?" I said.
>
> Nodding his head and looking at me through circles made with his index fingers, Uncle Reginald said gravely, "*On his eyes*."(199, emphasis in text)

The spell works. When he awakens, Draper Doyle discovers that his "missing week" is missing no longer. He remembers how –and, more importantly, *why*-- his father died, and this knowledge brings with it the possibility of freedom, for his mother, his sister, and Draper Doyle himself. Their departure is an incongruous one – especially for a "Divine Ryan":

> I had always figured that we would leave Fleming Street in a hearse, though I hadn't expected us to all go together, not to mention while we were still alive. Rather than climb into the casket compartment, which Aunt Phil wanted us to do so that no one on Fleming Street would see us, we all piled into the front seat with Uncle Reginald. More than one person on the route to the airport witnessed the unlikely sight of a woman and her two children, crammed like hitchhikers into the front seat of Reg Ryan's hearse, all laughing except for Uncle Reginald, whose mournful expression was even more pronounced than usual. (214)

Under patriarchy we all bear "the name of the father" so it is significant that, as a condition of their release (and symbolic gesture of excommunication), Aunt Phil insists that Draper Doyle's mother revert to her maiden name. Henceforth, the widow and her two children will be known by the more secular and mundane surname, Delaney. Draper Doyle, who, as Uncle Reginald has reminded him is the last male bearer of the Ryan name must, as a condition of freedom, leave that name behind him (212). This, however, does not subvert the already-established link between Draper Doyle and his father, nor does it break the semiotic chain: father/hockey/past/identity. It is surely no accident that, as a denouement, Draper Doyle discovers his father's final message to him (again, from "beyond the grave") in his copy of *The Cartoon Virgil*. Like Aeneas, Draper Doyle must emerge from the underworld (in his case, life under the tyranny of the "Divine Ryans") and fulfil his yet-to-be-discovered destiny.

The Last Season:

Hockey hauntings are not always so benign. Unlike the protagonist of *The Divine Ryans* who is looking for clues as to who his father really was and (by extension) who he himself may become, the central character of Roy MacGregor's novel *The Last Season* struggles to come to terms with a past – and an identity --that he has personally rejected, but which simply will not go away. Felix Batterinski is a member of the category euphemistically known as "New Canadians" and his Polish-immigrant father, whom he loves deeply, is a source of embarrassment to the acne-ridden and emotionally embattled teenager who hopes to become a professional hockey player. This is another example of the generational ethnic *cum* immigrant dilemma explored by Henry Kreisel in his short story, "The Broken Globe" (New LS 113-114). In *The Last Season,* however, while we see the world through Felix's eyes, they are angry eyes and, faced with such a seemingly unreliable narrator, our sympathies tend to lie with his father.

The story begins with a flashback. The fifteen-year-old Felix has left the bush community of Pomerania and is "boarding out" with a middle-class family in the town of Vernon. He is dismayed when his father who, according to him, "looks like a degenerate" (2), pays him a surprise visit:

> "Why have you come, Poppa?"
>
> "I want to see my son play hockey."
>
> "We don't play tonight. It's juveniles tonight. Midgets don't play until tomorrow."
>
> "Fine then. I'll stay till tomorrow."
>
> *Den. Den. Fine den.* …Christ, until I heard him I hadn't realized how much I'd lost. It was amazing what laughing behind your back could do for your front; I fell asleep thinking "th" and woke up saying it.
>
> "Never mind," Poppa said quickly, though I had said nothing. "I'll get a room at the hotel."
>
> I couldn't be sure whether he expected me to argue with him or not. But how could he have possibly stayed at the Riley's? If he went to the bathroom he wouldn't even know to flush. (MacGregor 4)

Ironically, the more Felix tries to escape the past, the more it pursues him. He is particularly determined to get away from his step-grandmother, Batcha, who has a reputation in her own community, as a *carovnica* or white witch. For Felix, Batcha and her folk remedies are a particularly potent symbol of "Polish" ignorance and superstition:

> Growing up with her always around, it had never seemed all that unusual to me. But now, coming from Vernon where Mrs. Riley had her sparkling medicine

> chest filled with every cure the television promised, Batcha seemed outrageously impossible. (MacGregor 29)

Still, he has some feelings of ambivalence, which lead to even more strenuous denial:

> I myself had seen her cure swollen cows' udders over at the Jazdas' by scratching the teats with a mole's foreclaw. And I remembered how when Jaja died she had forced Poppa to walk around the yard telling everything, chickens, bushes, trees, even a chipmunk, that the old man was dead, while she came along behind making the sign of the cross over everything Poppa spoke to. I remember he seemed embarrassed. But I also remember he did it. So not much had changed in Pomerania – they were still buying the old bitch's tricks. (30)

When the *carovnica* sacrifices a black cat, as part of a cure for a neighbour-woman's cancer, Felix confronts his father, who is more than a bit evasive:

> I shook my head. "Why do you let her do it?"....
>
> "Your Batcha is very well thought of around here, Felix,," he said.
>
> "She spooks me," I said....
>
> "You're fifteen years old, son. Has she hurt you yet?"

Batcha continues to "spook him," even years later, after she is dead, and when ex-NHL enforcer Felix Batterinski finally returns to Pomerania, his career in ruins, he blames her for everything:

> She fucked Philadelphia. She fucked Helsinki. She fucked me in Leningrad. It was always her, always at the window, laughing. Just like I heard her the other day. Wasn't the water at all. And she's still laughing.
>
> *Bitch!*

(MacGregor 303, emphasis in text)

The Last Season is a variant of the classic (the unsympathetic might say shop-worn) tale of the underprivileged Kid from the Sticks whose Special Talent enables him to Rise to Stardom. In fact, such "Cinderella Stories" were not all that rare in real life and for decades, the sons of farmers, factory workers, trappers, lumberjacks, and miners, have provided the common clay from which future hockey Hall-of-Famers would be shaped. In *The Last Season,* however, MacGregor manages to subvert the Rags-to-Riches cliché just enough to allow a different, much darker story to emerge. Felix Batterinski's (his name is a deliberate pun) special talent is that he is unusually tough, strong and aggressive, and he achieves fame (or at least notoriety) as one of hockey's premiere enforcers (read: "goons"):

> It was Orr and Batterinski, the two defencemen, they talked most about in Ontario junior. Bobby Orr would get the cover of MacLean's. I almost got the cover of Police Gazette after the Billings incident. My rep was made. The North Bay Nugget's nickname for me, Frankenstein, spread throughout the league....*They didn't know me. I didn't know myself.* But I loved being talked about in the same breath as the white brush cut from Parry Sound. (MacGregor 100, emphasis added)

Over time, however, Felix does learn to recognise the self he sees reflected in his ambivalent public image and to identify with his Frankenstein persona. But as his career falters (he is traded to an expansion team, and eventually ends up as a playing coach Europe) he also begins to understand the downside of life as a manufactured monster:

> *Your strength has become your weakness.* Wasn't that what Sugar had said? What did it mean? And Teddy Roosevelt? Something about a big stick. *Walk softly and carry a big stick…*What did Sugar mean?…Was I taking charge just to take charge? Walking loudly carrying a little stick? (219, emphasis in text)

As his self-doubt grows, he is increasingly pursued by negative aspects of his past, particularly Batcha. On a rare visit home to Pomerania, the increasingly demoralised Felix goes on daily runs to try to keep his aging body in "game shape":

> Ahead of me, just where the road would rise to the cedar knoll heading up to a rock face overlooking the swamp, a sun pocket lay in waiting. But I did not see it until I entered ….Four long strides and I was through – a light switched on at night, then instantly off—and the higher fog was already swallowing me when I spun in mid stride.
>
> *Batcha had been standing there!*
>
> My ankle caught and I stumbled, skidding on the grass embankment along the side, falling heavily to my knees in the gravel and stopping on all fours, my palms pounding the loose stone through….
>
> "Batcha?"
>
> But nothing. I looked at all sides of the strip of bright morning. There was the path, wet and glistening, the silver poplar trunks, dew on the cedar, some dry blueberry bushes, the blue sky in a narrow gap above, the fog banks on all sides –But not Batcha.
>
> Yet I *had* seen her….(220, emphasis in text)

Not long afterwards, Felix learns the meaning of the name Batcha had called him as a child. To her, he has always been a *vjeszczi* -- a monster – because he was born with a caul. Unknowingly, Batterinski has been a "Frankenstein" all along!

If Draper Doyle's journey resembles *The Aeneid* (in that he goes on to new beginnings), Felix Batterinski's follows the pattern of *The Odyssey*, a circular journey fraught with many perils, which finally takes him back to his point of origin. Here, however, all similarities cease, for there is no glad homecoming for the self-imposed exile from Pomerania. Ultimately, this hinterland anti-hero (who has wanted so desperately to be part of the mainstream) remains a displaced person: "In the end, I am just a Pole. Alone. All I can truly pray for is Batterinski, the poor dumb bastard. But pray for what?"(289). As his identity as a hockey player disintegrates, Felix becomes increasingly delusional and, in a last desperate act, he tries to lift the *vjeszczi* curse which (supposedly) has been on him since birth, and which the former sceptic now accepts with the zeal of a true believer. In his own words he attempts "to devour his past to nourish his future" (310)[5] But it is not his real past; this he has carelessly lost, along with his grandfather's cherished Batterinski Family History. Rather it is a false past, left behind by the vengeful spirit of Batcha. Felix Batterinski can neither come to terms with his Polish heritage, nor construct a viable alternative identity, and his failure to do so quite literally kills him.

"Now I Can Die In Peace":

The short story "Now I Can Die In Peace" in Paul Quarrington's anthology, *The Original Six,* also involves a ghost and a curse, but is a much lighter treatment of such explicitly occult elements. This time, the narrator himself is a ghost who, from the seemingly cosy confines of his grave, tells the story of his past life as a hockey fan, and (for a time) office boy at Madison Square Garden. Once again, the opening scene occurs in a cemetery, where the narrator's grandson has arrived, radio in hand, to share the New York Rangers 1994 Stanley Cup victory with the most passionate and dedicated Rangers fan he has ever known:

> "Grandpa! Listen! Listen! They finally did it! Huh?"
>
> Yes, yes, I hear it now, the radio, the shouts, the chanting, the fireworks. They're playing it over and over on the radio: "That's the one that will last a lifetime!"(Klein 136)

The ghostly granddad urges his "boy" to celebrate in a more orthodox fashion – that is, with the living:

> Hey, go on now! I appreciate your coming out here at night, but you should really be with your friends, you should be out in the city, not in a goddamn cemetery holding a radio to a grave. Go on, get going…don't forget to put a pebble on my headstone on your way out. (138)

He then reflects on the apparent fact that finally "the Curse is ended" (138).

The "Curse" in question involves a real bit of hockey apocrypha having to do with an explanation as to why, for decades, the New York Rangers were unable to win the Stanley Cup:

> People say Red Dutton and his Amerks – that's what they called the New York Americans—cursed the Rangers so they'd never win another Stanley Cup, but I happen to know that's bullshit. That wasn't the Curse. I know what the Curse was…. (138)

Before he "tells all" however, the narrator launches into a personal history describing how a Brooklyn-born, Jewish American ended up as a cultural anomaly – a hockey fan in a nation where baseball reigns supreme:

> It was different if you were talking about Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Joe Louis—those guys were royalty. But the Rangers? This was New York, where nobody gave a shit about hockey except the 10,000 or 12,000 who showed up for the games. I mean these galoomps were *Canadians*, for Christ's sake. (141)

However, because the narrator, at seventeen, "lucked into a job as an office boy at The Garden" (141), he grows to love this alien sport from the cold white North, and through him we learn the truth about "The Curse." It seems that, not long after the Rangers won the Stanley Cup in 1940, then-Garden-President, General John Reed Kilpatrick and other Board Members, decided to hold a Mortgage burning party to celebrate the fact that they now owned the famous arena "free and clear." Conveniently enough, a recently acquired trophy, honouring an obscure Canadian game, was fireproof, bowl-shaped, and handy:

> I was horrified. Was the General really going to defile the Cup by burning some financial document in it? I had seen how hard the players had worked to win that thing, how they'd laughed as they hugged it and drank out of it, how reverently Frankie Boucher and Lester Patrick, the coach and manager, who'd bled for the Cup so many times as players, gazed upon it in the dressing room, how all those Canucks up in Toronto got all hot about the funny-looking silver

> stovepipe with all the names on it, this trophy that was *almost 50 years old,* for Christ's sake! And Kilpatrick was going to *burn* something in it. (145)

Worse still, the young office boy is "asked" (but it is clear to him that this is an order not a request) to provide his employer with the fatal match. He complies (not without trepidation) and the deed is done:

> They stood, mouths open, champagne glasses in hand, the ends of their cigars glowing well clear of their polished and neatly cuticled fingernails, enjoying this, the payoff for their avarice, an indoor bonfire that used as a prop an object fought and bled over by scores of working class foreigners – a wealth-confirming, status-enhancing potlatch, but one in which someone else's hard-earned capital gets pissed away. (146-47)

The youthful narrator may have grown up near Coney Island, but he still knows that "there was something really, really wrong about burning something in the Stanley Cup"(147), and for the rest of his life, he is tormented by guilt over his complicity in the desecration of the "Holy Grail of hockey." Partly as penance, (and long after he has severed all ties with his former employer) he continues to buy season tickets and cheer on what soon became a chronically losing team, because "I always figured if they'd win the Cup, I'd be off the hook"(150). The Curse, however, turns out to be both tenacious and insidious. Eventually even the Ranger fans are affected: "with each passing futile season, my friends became more bitter, more ingeniously repulsive, more drunk with their own bile"(151-152). When his grandson, who from the age of six has accompanied him to Rangers games, shows signs of mutating into "an *echt* Ranger fan. A monster" (1 54) the narrator, now elderly and ailing, decides that things have gone far enough. He wills the boy his season tickets (on condition that he promises to conduct himself in a gentlemanly and sportsmanlike fashion) and quietly stops taking the heart medicine that has been keeping him alive for the past several years. The former Garden employee dies in his sleep without ever having told his grandson about the real curse, and his own role in it. Only the reader is privy to his posthumous autobiography.

"The Return of Aurel Joliat":

Two other texts from the Beardsley anthology are spectral in a more diffuse and implicit sense. In his short story, "The Return of Aurel Joliet," David Gowdy's central character, who, appropriately enough is conducting research at the National Archives, is one of the thousands who, during the Ottawa winters, skate to work on the Rideau canal. There he experiences a "real life" encounter with a hockey legend (hence "national treasure")[6] former Montreal Canadien, Aurel Joliat. He first observes the elderly Joliat in an old-fashioned Bytown barbershop:

> I didn't know at the time but the small man with thin legs in the corner of the room had been one of hockey's greatest stars in the 1920s…Finally he checked the weather outside, said his goodbyes, put on his coat and left. Lamontagne [the barber] made sure I knew who he was.
>
> "He wasn't a scorer like Morenz?" I asked.
>
> "He was great himself without Morenz – but he missed him when he was gone." Morenz of course had died, in the legend from a broken heart, ten days after a severely fractured leg had ended his hockey career. (Gowdy, in Beardsley, 267-68)

Shortly afterwards, the narrator notices Joliat "with a hockey stick, pushing a puck in front of him" (268) also skating on the canal, and soon they are "passing back and forth, until the puck disappeared in a deep snow drift and we called it quits" (268). Subsequently, he learns that Joliat has a reason for these impromptu practices:

> He was going back to Montreal into the Forum for a salute to the Canadiens that month. The game would be televised across the country. The Rocket would be there, Harvey, Blake, Dickie Moore, all the stars still left from the most dominant teams in sports history. It would be the largest tribute to the team ever mounted and they wanted him to be last on the ice. (268)

The night of the tribute finally arrives and the narrator, watching on television from a tavern in Ottawa, sees Joliat skate unto the ice, and after a brave start, fall down twice (once tripping over the obligatory red carpet). The crowd responds with cheers as well as laughter and, moments later, as a kind of cryptic encore, Joliat scores on Goalie Lorne "Gump" Worsley:

> The crowd laughed and cheered for a final time. He tore off his cap and waved to them, both arms flung in the air. Again he neared the fatal carpet, but Harvey and Toe Blake grabbed him under the arms. He stood there once more in the centre of the Forum, where Howie Morenz had lain in state forty-five years before, where he'd taken face-offs and held the Stanley Cup, and the cheering rained down, the Canadiens surrounding him, Larry Robinson tapping him on the shin-pads with his stick. (269)

For the narrator, Joliat's "last hurrah" is both sublime and ridiculous. Then, as if to remind the fans that Montreal's "glory days" really are gone forever, the following

Saturday they lose to their arch-rivals, the Toronto Maple Leafs. Fortunately, for narrator and reader alike, the real climax is yet to come:

> I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night. The snow shifted outside and I walked to the window, gradually clearing my eyes. From the dark room a looked out onto the canal, and in the distance I noticed a skater approaching down the miles of open ice.
>
> He was pushing a puck in front of him, and I saw as he drew nearer that he was wearing a cap. It was Joliat. Tonight there was nothing in his way, no boards, no players, no carpet. He drove towards me, labouring a little, clouds of breath vanishing over his shoulder. He was skating as fast as he could. The wind rushed in, roaring in his ears like a crowd, and he swept down the ice past me going full tilt, the way he had always desired. (270)

Solitude and snow; a cold winter night. The voice of the crowd in the wind. Is the solitary skater simply a product of the narrator's sleep-drugged and hockey-obsessed imagination? Or, if it is not a dream, is it the Joliat of the present or rather some time-travelling spirit from long ago, the essence of Aurel Joliat, skating into history? The reader, like the narrator, can only watch and wonder.

King Leary:

Also included in the Beardsley anthology is an excerpt from the novel, *King Leary*. In it, author Paul Quarrington provides a fictional account of a reform school alumnus who graduates to become a professional hockey star (the principal character, Percival H. Leary, is loosely based on Toronto Maple Leafs' star, King Clancy). After having been convicted of arson, the narrator, a post-pubescent thuglet and self-styled "hard case" is taken by train to serve his term in the Bowmanville Reformatory for Boys. When he finally arrives at the station he discovers that his jailers are monks – complete with black robes, cowls and a more than requisite quota of eccentricities. One is a virtual giant and hideously ugly, another is almost a dwarf, a third appears to be blind, and the fourth, and last, looks so frail that he is "just barely there"(Quarrington, in Beardsley 162). Riding from the station in a dilapidated horse-drawn cart the future King Leary is given a hint of what his punishment will consist of:

> I found a hockey puck. It seemed a strange thing to find in a cart full of monks. I rooted around some more and came up with a pair of skates and a couple of sticks.
>
> The ugly one, who'd told me that his name was Brother Simon, puckered up his face truly gruesome in order to ask; "Do you play hockey, Percival ?"
>
> I shrugged, juvenile delinquent-style, but managed to sneak a little nod into it. (163)

Stranger still is the reformatory itself. It is not –to say the least-- typical of institutions designed to "discipline and punish":

> Ahead of me, sitting at the end of a road and the top of a hill, was a castle. It looked like a picture ripped out of one of my brother Lloyd's storybooks, *The Knights of the Round Table.* The first time I saw it, the reformatory was golden in the autumn sun, all covered by clouds and ivy. It had turrets and round windows and even a moat, except for the moat was just an ambitious ditch. We

> had to cross a small bridge to get over, and then we had to pass under a gateway. I looked up and saw that someone had burned these words into the wood:
>
> "TO KEEP A BOY OUT OF HOT WATER, PUT HIM ON ICE."(163)

Predictably, it turns out that the rehabilitation program at Bowmanville is centred on hockey, exemplifying the time-honoured notion (discussed in Ch I) of sport as a "character building" activity. At Bowmanville, however, the game is played on a rink that is perfectly round, evoking the natural contours of "the Pond" and symbolising for the aptly-named Percival (Parsifal) the medieval and quasi-mythical nature of his bizarre environment.

The program, unorthodox though it may be, seems to work, at least for the narrator who, in the words of Brother Simon the Ugly, "is something of a natural" (166). Not only is Percival saved from a life of crime, he eventually achieves fame, if not fortune, as King Leary, "the heart and soul of the Ottawa Paddies…captain of the shinny-playing Irishers" (167). As an old man, the once (and perhaps future) "King" Leary recalls his days at the reformatory. He remembers a certain night when, for some reason, he was unable to sleep:

> …I was restless. There was a full moon, and it filled the window across from my cot…The moon was a strange colour too, silver, like a nickel had been flipped into the sky.
>
> Then I heard the sounds, the soft windy sweeping of hockey sticks across ice. At first I thought I was dreaming, but then I recalled that I never did dream to speak of. I moved across to the window, soft on my feet so as not to wake the

> other delinquents. The moon was so bright that I do believe I squinted my eyes. I have never seen it like that since. (168)

There, on the circular rink Percival sees the monks, and they are playing a strange game – hockey, yet not hockey-- on the ice:

> I could see the rink, and I could see the shadows moving on it….It quickened my heart. I threw on some clothes and flew outside….There were no goal nets on the ice. Just five men, a puck, and a lot of moonlight. They played in silence. I moved closer. (168-169)

To his amazement, Percival realises that the best player on the ice is none other than Brother Isaiah the Blind:

> ….here he was skating around like a madman, stealing pucks, passing and receiving, and the moonlight was sitting on his dead eyes like it does on the still surface of a lake….Whatever the hell game they were playing – and I never did come close to figuring it –Brother Isaiah was the best. In fact Brother Isaiah was the best I've ever seen, bar none. That includes me…. (169)

In the words of Leonard Cohen "magic is afoot" or must be, if hockey can be played without goals and blind men can see!

Power Play:

Other media have employed ghostly elements to remind us of our connection to the past. *Power Play*, a television series produced by the Canadian corporation, Alliance Atlantis, was introduced in the late 1990s, and ran for two seasons on the CTV network before finally being cancelled due to poor ratings in the US. Half morality play, half soap opera, *Power Play* tells the story of the Hamilton Steelheads, a fictional small-market Canadian NHL franchise, and the embattled team's efforts to survive in the high-priced world of professional hockey. One of the ongoing themes of the series is continuity, and in several episodes ghosts appear to the protagonist to re-introduce him to events from his past and to admonish him regarding his present conduct. Their message? You have to remain true to tradition, in hockey, as in life.

The importance of continuity is made clear at the outset by the program's opening. The theme music is Stompin' Tom Connors' song "The Good Old Hockey Game." Initially, we hear the song sung by Tom himself, over a grainy black and white (signalling "the past" as well as "the real") montage of children and adults playing pond hockey, long shots of the Hamilton steel mills, and close ups of the hands of working men carrying lunch boxes and punching time cards. Then, at a certain point, we segue to the present. Colour replaces black and white, and the audience now hears a "cover" version of the same song, this time performed by the contemporary "Celt-Rock" band, Great Big Sea. As the credits roll, we see Hamilton today (principally the Copps Coliseum where much of the action is set) and the faces various cast members. (The above is reinforced on a weekly basis as the same sequence appears at the beginning of every episode.)

Power Play is a Canadian product that was obviously created with an eye to the American audience. It makes fun of cultural clichés on both sides of the border. In the first episode, when the main character, Brett Parker (expatriate Canadian and successful player agent --with headquarters in New York, of course!) tells his American girlfriend he is going home to Hamilton, she insists that Hamilton is in

Bermuda. When he argues ("No, it's in Ontario") she flatly states that she knows perfectly well where it is, since she was there just last week. This is only one of several examples lampooning American arrogance and ignorance about things Canadian. However, with typically "Canadian" self-deprecation *Power Play* includes comments such as the following: "A young 'hip' guy named 'Ashley', plays a fiddle, wears a kilt -- only in Canada!" (Episode Eight) and the first episode begins with a scene in which marketing "whiz" Parker vetoes a film clip on the grounds that it is "too Canadian." The first thing the television audience sees is an aerial shot of a frozen prairie landscape, then shortly the camera cuts to a game of shinny (both are filmed in black and white)[7]. At the same time, a voiceover is telling us that "…It was born from the land, an expression of joy and community in the face of bleak winter…It is a game, yes, but also a tribal ritual; a blood bond handed down from generation to generation…."

"All right --KILL IT!" Abruptly we hear the voice of Brett Parker, and the audience realises that we have been watching a film (shown in a conference room in New York). Parker continues:

"What the HELL was that? We're supposed to sell fire on ice -- this was KIDS WITH FROZEN SNOT!!!! WHO DID THIS????"

The film which was to have been the network opener for the forthcoming playoffs turns out to have been directed by someone named Ian. Parker pounces:

"Ian? Ian….with a name like that you wouldn't…you wouldn't conceivably be CANADIAN would you?"

When Ian replies that "hockey is universal, eh," Parker's response is, by now, expected:

> "He said 'eh.' GET HIM OUTA HERE!...How many times do I have to tell you, you don't hire Canadians for these jobs. They don't know how to sell hockey. They don't know ANYTHING ABOUT HOCKEY.... (Episode One)

This brief (two to three minute) vignette pokes fun at stereotypes (this time Canadian ones) while establishing Brett Parker's persona as an alienated American "wannabe."

The conflict that drives the series centres on the interactions of three principal characters. The team owner, ""Duff"" McArdle (played by Gordon Pinsent) is both a businessman (he also owns McArdle Industries) and a lover of hockey. He is torn, because he knows that it would make good economic sense to move the franchise to an American city, but his heart is in his hometown, Hamilton. He hires Brett Parker to manage the team, and instructs him that his preordained task is to keep the team from moving. This pits Brett against Colleen Blessed, president of the Steelheads and CEO of McArdle Industries, who has been instructed, (again by ""Duff""), to sell the team to the highest bidder.

""Duff"," himself, lives mainly in the past and is constantly reminiscing[8] yet he has problems with his short term memory (implying that recent events are somehow tainted by their proximity to the present, and, as a result, are less meaningful). In the context of the plot structure of individual episodes, he functions as a kind of *deus ex machina*, setting near-impossible tasks for Brett and Colleen, then sabotaging their chances of achieving their respective goals. In true soap opera fashion, a love interest develops between the two, both "hometown kids who've (more-or-less) made good" and both characters who must be reminded -- in Brett's case at times forcefully --of where they come from. In a pivotal moment, after seeing the house that Brett grew up in, and in which he lives once again, Colleen observes that: "Parker, you're just like me" (Episode Ten).

It is clear, in *Power Play*, that the fate of a small-market team is also tied to national survival (Canada as "small-market" country) and a set of values. ""Duff"" McArdle embodies old-style paternalistic capitalism displaced by the "new world order" and he remarks, in true Tory fashion that: "Nobody knows why they do anything any more....There's *just some things they have to hang on to"* (episode one, emphasis added). Family is represented by Brett's teenaged daughter Michele whom he abandoned as a child (in favour of his career) but with whom, upon his return to Hamilton, he re-establishes a relationship. However, when he asks her if she wishes to call him "dad," she demurs, explaining that " 'dad' is something you earn, like 'doctor' or 'major.'" Later, when confronting a young "cool" American hockey player who wants to date her she challenges his cynical attitude toward the game and asserts Canadian Difference: "Hockey is not just a 'gig'. It's not just 'show biz', *not in this country*" (Episode Seven, emphasis added).

While Brett and Colleen occupy the slots of protagonist/antagonist, the role of moral exemplar is shared by Brett's secretary Renata (devout Catholic and daughter of Italian immigrants) and the aptly named "Terminal" Todd Maplethorpe[9] the Steelhead's "enforcer" who is the archetypal Saskatchewan farm boy turned professional hockey player. Both can always be relied on to "do the right thing." In Renata's case this includes everything from acting as Brett's conscience to singing the pre-game national anthem when Ashley McIsaac cancels. Todd tempers justice with "Canadian" deference when, after delivering a bone-crushing hit to an opposing player who had previously body-checked Steelheads' star Mark Simpson into the boards, he politely remarks: "I'm asking you not to touch Mister Simpson" (Episode One). Later, when a rumour that one of the players is gay threatens to divide the team during their crucial drive to the play-offs, Todd "outs himself" proclaiming his gayness to a locker room full of astonished Steelheads[10]. In a gesture of solidarity, captain Simpson and several other team-mates announce that they too are gay, and harmony is restored. Both Renata and Todd put the welfare of the Steelheads ahead of their own.

These community values are all, in one way or another, opposed to economic rationalism because, as the series makes clear, it actually *would* make sense (and dollars) to move the team south. McArdle industries is going broke and the money from the hockey franchise might save the business, which in turn would mean saving jobs for local steelmill employees. Even the players could benefit, as a result of potentially higher salaries paid by big-market franchises.

It is only the protagonist, (the "ethically-challenged" Brett Parker) who sees ghosts. While he has spectral encounters with, among others, Bill Barilko, Jacques Plante, and the legendary Howie Morenz, not all of these hockey apparitions are NHL "stars." He also sees the ghost of the Steelhead's recently-deceased general manager, who coached him during his promising Peewee career, as well as the ghost of his father, a career minor leaguer who was always somewhere else ("road games") when his son needed him. One night, after a loss, estranged from his players, and alone in the arena parking lot, Parker is accosted by the ghosts of the Dawson City Seven[11] who tell him that, when times are hard and things fall apart, its good to "be with your team" (Episode Three). The protagonist of *Power Play* must learn that he can only address new realities by remembering, and being true to, the old. In the final scene of the concluding episode he is (literally) invited to embrace the past, when his father's ghost clasps him in his arms. The series *Power Play* is well named, since it is about both play (hockey) and power. It reminds us that:

> The subordinate may be disempowered but they are not powerless. There is a power in resisting power, there is a power in maintaining one's social identity in opposition to that proposed by the dominant ideology, there is a power in asserting one's own subcultural values against the dominant ones. There is, in short, a power in being different. (Fiske TC 19)

Conclusion:

Both the excerpt from *King Leary* and "The Return of Aurel Joliat," end with a kind of "dream vision" and appropriately so. In the case of the former, we are seeing a cartoon version of a medieval romance, albeit one with classical undertones since Brother Isaiah functions as a Tiresias figure, privileging inner vision over the more mundane ability to see physically. Also, both Tiresias, and the monk's biblical namesake (the prophet Isaiah), claimed to be able to predict the future. This adds an interesting dimension to a story that is narrated retrospectively, because the reader already knows that Percival's potential for hockey stardom will be fulfilled. In "The Return of Aurel Joliat," past and present form a kind of palimpsest, as the after-image of the Great Aurel Joliat of the past has superimposed upon it, the inept -- but also heroic --"old man with thin legs" who stumbles under the weight of his reputation.

This is reinforced by the last scene in which the "real" Joliat (of the present) is sandwiched between the memory man and the spectral skater of Rideau canal. Curses, ghosts, and family connections all figure in both *The Last Season* and "Now I Can Die In Peace," reminding us of the need for continuity, and warning us of the danger of losing our links with the past. In *Power Play* Brett Parker learns that, not only *can* he "go home again" but he had better do so -- and quickly! Fortunately his ghosts are there to show him the way. Finally, the most explicit connection between ghosts, memory, and identity is made in *The Divine Ryans,* since Draper Doyle's father's ghost actually functions as an agent of recovered memory.

Notes to Chapter III

[1] (Anderson 6)

[2] (Macherey, in Easthope et al. 29)

[3] For a discussion of the role played by cenotaphs and monuments in the specific case of Canadian national identity formation see: *Death So Noble* by Jonathon Vance.

[4] See Chapter V. for a more detailed discussion of "the Stratford Streak" Howie Morenz (1902-1937).

[5] In doing so, he accidentally consumes rat poison.

[6] The narrator's occupation takes on even greater resonance now that the National Archives of Canada have purchased sixty some items of Maurice "Rocket" Richard memorabilia from the Richard family for the sum of $600,000.

[7] This is an example of self-reflexivity also, since some of the same footage is used in the weekly introduction to *Power Play.*

[8] Throughout the series, ""Duff"" keeps up a continuous patter of anecdotes and remarks on Canadian themes and icons. He recalls Canadian swimmer Marilyn Bell "a pretty little thing when she wasn't all pruney," laments the cancellation of *Don Messer's Jubilee*, refers to someone as "huffin' and puffin' like (former CTV news anchor) Harvey Kirk, etc. In another instance he takes Brett Parker's American girlfriend on a tour of Hamilton, pointing out and describing the buildings that used to be, as she (puzzled) follows him from parking lot to parking lot.

[9] Todd's name and title contain allusions to the *Terminator* films starring Arnold Schwarzeneggar, hockey film *Slapshot's* fear-inducing goon "Ogie Oglethorpe" and, of course, the Maple Leaf (forever!).

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[10] Although it's not stated explicitly, the context makes clear that Todd himself is not gay, but rather protecting the identity of the player who is.

[11] "Of the many challenges in Stanley Cup history, 1905 provided the most unusual. The famed Ottawa Silver Seven, were challenged by a team from Dawson City in the Yukon. The Klondikers travelled 4000 miles to Ottawa, part of the way by dogsled, where they were humiliated by one of the greatest teams ever assembled" (McFarlane 6).

Chapter IV. The Age of Innocence

"The child is father to the man."[1]

-William Wordsworth.

"Hockey's golden era was whenever you were twelve years old."[2]

-Ken Dryden

Ghosts are not the only emissaries from the past. When we think of history, with a small "h," it may take us down the path of personal recollection to our own private *temps perdus*. Much of the writing and commentary about hockey and Canadian identity is characterised by a pattern of retrospection. As mentioned, all the texts discussed in the previous chapter involve some form of "looking back." In *The Last Season*, "Now I Can Die In Peace," and the excerpt from *King Leary,* retrospection appears to be an obvious and deliberate narrative strategy. In *The Last Season* the narrative moves back and forth, across space and time, from 1960 in Vernon Ontario to 1982 in Pomerania Ontario, (with stops in Finland, Sudbury, and Philadelphia). We hear the voice, not just of the thirty-something, "over-the-hill" Batterinski, but also of the isolated and insecure teenage boy. The age of the narrator is significant here because it is a novel about origins, but also because flashbacks enhance the contrast between settings, i.e. the hinterland (backwoods Ontario) and the metropolis (as represented – in different ways – by both Helsinki and Philadelphia).

Similarly, Quarrington has the elderly King Leary resurrect his youthful persona, in order to recreate (in story) his (trans)formative time at Bowmanville. In “Now I Can Die in Peace” the narrator is again an old man, who "flashes back" to earlier days; we begin (quite literally) at the end, and the entire piece is an exercise in explaining “how we got there from here." Also, as mentioned earlier, while *The Divine Ryans* is a tale told by a nine-year-old, it is written in the first person, giving it an autobiographical (hence retrospective) cast.

We all know that memory is selective, and the “good old days” quite often weren’t. The "amnesias" that Anderson (204) writes of are "characteristic" of more than the just the histories of nations. Also, as David Morley points out, the "image of a Golden Age when all the members of the community lived in a paradisical state of social harmony is, of course, constructed precisely as the negative image of 'nowadays'" (HT 216). But I would like to remind the reader once again that this study is not an attempt to measure the extent to which our myths accurately reflect “real experience." Rather it is about identifying the cultural role they appear play and the collective needs and desires that they seem to fulfil – in spite of what is, at times, their unabashedly fictive nature.

Pastoral Premises:

The idea of a Golden Age goes back a very long time (even as far as the Garden of Eden). In the words of the Roman poet Ovid:

> The Golden Age was first, a time that cherished
> Of its own will, justice and right; no law,
> No punishment, was called for: fearfulness

> Was quite unknown, and the bronze tablets held
> No legal threatening…. (*Metamorphoses*)[3]

There is, as well, a Canadian cultural tradition involving both precocious children and golden ages. According to Northrop Frye:

> At the heart of all social mythology lies what may be called, because it usually is called, a pastoral myth, the vision of a social ideal. The pastoral myth in its most common form is associated with childhood, or with some earlier social condition – pioneer life, the small town, the habitant rooted to his land—that can be identified with childhood. The nostalgia for a world of peace and protection, with a spontaneous response to the nature around it, with a leisure and composure not to be found today, is particularly strong in Canada. (Frye 556)

The most obvious example –and one of several cited by Frye himself-- is the enduring popularity of the works of Lucy Maud Montgomery, especially *Anne of Green Gables,* and the success of the theatrical and televisual "spin-offs," including the Disney co-production Road *to Avonlea* (Bodroghkozy 8). As Canadian media critic Paul Rutherford has noted, Anne Shirley, the turn-of-the-century, "carrot top" is firmly established as national icon (276) along with beavers, mounties and, of course, hockey. It is interesting to speculate whether or not Anne's orphan status might be significant in a country known for its habitually self-conscious wondering about who we really are. Also, it is possible to ascribe the appeal of the Avonlea fictional world to the fact that it shows how different we are from the Americans[4]. (Canada is small, rural, innocent and old-fashioned; the US is large, urban, and corrupt). However, none of this goes very far to explain why some of *Anne of Green Gables'* most enthusiastic fans are Japanese school children, nor can we readily point to "essential" differences between *Road to Avonlea* and an American series such as *The Waltons.*

There is also a simpler explanation. L.M. Montgomery was writing for a readership that was mostly made up of young people and, presumably, this is one reason why she presented an idealised view of the world. In the case of hockey, long before the advent of poems, plays and "serious" novels about the game, Canadian writers such as Leslie McFarlane (*The Dynamite Flynn; McGonnigle Scores)* and Scott Young (*Scrubs on Skates)* were producing juvenile fiction[5]. While not as morally exhortative as *Goodie Two-Shoes* or the Horatio Alger stories, these works are primarily parables. As well, they are "action-centred" and ahistorical; like comic books, they are set in an eternal present. This pattern persists in more recent examples such as *The Mocassin Goalie, Mr. Zamboni's Dream Machine,* and *Dear Don Cherry: Does Hockey Love Kids?* as well as Roy MacGregor's *Screech Owl* series, commissioned by McClelland & Stewart in 1995, and explicitly aimed at nine to thirteen-year-olds. Ostensibly stories about hockey, all the above foreground issues such racism, divorce, and violence in sport, and do so in ways that suggest they are clearly part of the pedagogy machine. Referring to the MacGregor stories, (which became the basis of a half-hour weekly TV series of the same name), journalist Brian Bethune notes that "in print and on the screen, MacGregor's true-to-life hockey is framed by morality plays" (Macleans, Feb 5, 2001).

In contrast, a novel such as *The Divine Ryans*, along with many of the short stories discussed below, represents a break with this tradition. While the narrator –

who is often also the central character – is a child, the stories themselves are neither for, nor exclusively about, children. This child narrator/character doubling recalls the fiction of Margaret Laurence, especially her semi-autobiographical collection, *A Bird in the House*. As critics (Stovel; Grace) have noted, this device of "double-voiced" retrospective narration allows for "a wonderfully evocative double perspective that presents simultaneously the world as it registers upon the child and the world as the narrating adult understands it" (Stovel 83). Stovel adds "this 'memory of a memory' epitomises not only the book's narrative technique of creative remembrance but also its theme" (83). In a similar vein, Theresa Quigley, in her work entitled *The Child Hero in the Canadian Novel,* comments on the predominance of what she terms "the memory narrative" …[and the]…stress placed on the differences in point of view and perceptions of life that exist between …the world of the child and that of the adult" (132). *The Divine Ryans* is a case in point. Draper Doyle's inability to remember the events surrounding his father's death inspires the ever-irreverent Uncle Reginald to offer his services as a "psycho-oralist":

> It was, he said, the opposite of psychoanalysis….The job of an analyst was to take his patient seriously. The job of an oralyst was to make him laugh. An analyst had his patient lie on a couch. An oralyst had him tell the truth, whether it was on a couch or somewhere else – only the oralyst was allowed to lie, which he could be counted on to do almost constantly. (Johnston 28-29)

The character, Draper Doyle, naively consents to what the reader (and presumably, Uncle Reginald) knows to be a preposterous suggestion. But as the following passage reveals, Draper Doyle the narrator speaks from beyond, as well as within, the experiential boundaries of his nine-year-old self:

> "But for God's sake, he said, "don't tell anyone you're being oralized by your uncle. If you do I'll be arrested." Though I asked him, he refused to explain what he meant by this.
>
> How I began to look forward to plodding up those steps, a nine-year-old in need of therapy, my lunchbox in my hand, my schoolbag bouncing. There to be oralized by Uncle Reginald, who, *I now realize, was quite right in not wanting me to use that phrase in public*. (Johnston 30, emphasis added)

The Church of Hockey

In the *Divine Ryans,* two of Johnston's main preoccupations are with repressed sexuality and recovered memory, topics that are more often the preserve of women writers and female protagonists. As well as coming to terms with his father's death Draper Doyle must deal with the onset of puberty and his own sexual awakening, issues similar to those explored by Alice Munro's female child narrators (e.g. Del in *Lives of Girls and Women* and Rose in *Who Do You Think You Are?*). In this difficult time, he is sustained, not only by the saturnine yet kindly Uncle Reginald, but also by his certainty that he will always have hockey:

> I could think of only two things our family had done together on anything like a regular basis – one was watch the hockey game on Saturday night, and the other was to go to early mass on Sunday morning…When, at dinner one night, Aunt Phil announced that the whole family was getting together for the Habs

> first televised game of the season this coming Saturday, I screamed "hurray!" causing Mary and my mother to roll their eyes....
>
> "It's only a hockey game you know, Draper Doyle," Mary said....Hockey, all it is is people hitting a piece of rubber back and forth with sticks."
>
> "Water," I said, "all it is is hydrogen and oxygen. Why drink it?"
>
> (Johnston 73)

In his anthology, *Our Game,* Doug Beardsley devotes an entire section (entitled "Growing Up on Ice") to narrator/characters many of whom engage in either explicit or implicit retrospection. Judith Fitzgerald's "Saturday Evenings in the Church of Hockey Night in Canada" is one example. Like *The Divine Ryans,* this story, for the main part a reminiscence of growing up with a hockey-obsessed grandfather, draws an analogy between hockey and religion:

> Grandpa's hockey talks border on sermons from the chrome-chair pulpit. In full-flying language the colour of conviction he holds forth on the pros and princes of his unbeatable Leafs with excruciating affection. He berates my allegiance to an American team, he denigrates Howe's ascending star status, and he ridicules "those stupid guys who don't know the difference between a hockey puck and makin' a buck," especially since one of his guys gets traded "for no good reason. *Sacrifice*!"

The story outlines the friendly feud between Doré (the narrator) who is a Detroit Red Wings fan, and her grandfather , a " scrappy Quebecois[sic] named Gabby" (18) who "migrated to Toronto in the latter half of the 1940s"(18) and subsequently became a dedicated supporter of the hometown Maple Leafs. The narrative also emphasises the interpretative aspect of spectatorship, as Doré and her grandfather clash repeatedly over "the truth" about various on-ice incidents, especially newspaper accounts of a 1950 altercation between Ted Kennedy and Gordie Howe that almost cost the latter his career:

> "Read it, Grandpa, what does it say?"
>
> "It says, 'Teeder innocent, Howe guilty. Case closed.'"
>
> "Where, Grandpa, where? Show me!"
>
> "Right here, see? Right above the picture. 'Young Gordie Howe busts his head on the boards 'cause of his own stupid fault and Teeder didn't do nothing wrong.'" (21)

. Eventually, after five years of wrangling, Doré and her grandfather finally achieve a kind of truce when the latter concedes that the 1954-55 Stanley Cup winning Red Wings did, in fact, "play the best" (29). Fitzgerald concludes on a retrospective note:

> Looking back, I recall Saturday evenings in the Church of Hockey Night in Canada with a mixture of bemusement and gratitude. I spent time with an extraordinary character who taught *the truth* in astonishingly simple terms: *"Aujourd'hui roi, demain rien."* Several decades later, my photograph of Grandpa standing in front of Betsy, his beautiful, beat-up Buick, still hangs at eye level on my kitchen wall, right next to our favourite picture of Gordie [Howe].... (29)

Symbolising as it does the "astonishingly simple" values of a simpler time, a shared love of hockey is the glue that binds together family members, and iconically (through photos) connects past and present.

Also included in the Beardsley anthology are the short story "Hockey Night in Canada" by Diane Schoemperlen and an excerpt from the novel *The Age of Longing* by Richard B. Wright. In the former, the narrator/character is a girl in her early teens who, like her father, is a hockey fan:

> We settled ourselves in our usual places, my father and I, while the singer made his way out onto the ice and the organist cranked up for "O Canada" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Saturday night and we were ready for anything, my father half-sitting, half-lying on the chesterfield with his first dark rum and Pepsi, and me in the swivel chair beside the picture window with a box of barbecue chips and a glass of 7-Up. (Schoemperlen, in Beardsley, 84)

Her mother, a properly gendered woman of her time, is not:

> My mother was ripping apart with relish a red-and-white polka dot dress she hadn't worn in years....Trying to interest someone in her project and her practicality, she said, "Why this fabric is just as good as new," pulling first one sleeve, then the other, away from the body of the dress.
>
> But the game was starting and we were already intent on the screen and each other. (84)

Hockey clearly connects some family members more closely than others, and the problem of the narrator's mother's exclusion is compounded when the hockey night circle expands to include her widowed friend Rita, an ardent fan of the Montreal Canadiens:

> When her friend Rita was there, my mother at least played at watching the game. Whenever the crowd roared, my father groaned and Rita began to shriek, my mother would look up from her stamp collection…and smile encouragement at the TV.
>
> "Who scored?" she asked innocently…. (85)

Rita, as well as being a hockey fan, is also, in the eyes of the adolescent narrator, something of a "woman of the world" (She dyes her hair and leaves a trail of lipstick-tipped cigarette butts in her wake). The story skirts the suggestion that Rita is a potential "homewrecker" while, at the same time, hinting (retrospectively) that an affair between the two adult "hockey lovers" was at least a possibility:

> Only once did I find my father and Rita alone in the house. I came home from Mary's late one Saturday afternoon and they were drinking rum at the kitchen table, with the record player turned up loud in the living room. They seemed neither surprised nor sorry to see me. There was something funny about Rita's eyes when she looked up at me though, a lazy softness, a shining, which I just naturally assumed to be an effect of the rum. (93)

As Gruneau and Whitson point out "while sport can bring people together it can also divide them" (217) and Schoemperlen's story is in large part, about the marginalisation of those (in this case the mother, Violet) who are not faithful members of the church of hockey. In this instance, conservative family values are threatened by the more carnivalesque pleasures of the body, symbolised by both sport itself and the dithryrambic spectator (i.e.Rita). The narrator/character however, is too young to understand this, and the story ends with Violet's admonishment to her husband (they have been arguing about Rita): "Be quiet, she'll hear you"…. (93).

In Richard B. Wright's novel *The Age of Longing* we are taken back to an earlier time by a story-teller who is the middle-aged son of a former hockey player, and who begins his story with this statement:

> When I was three or four years old, I used to look for the Stanley Cup in my mother's china cabinet…. Where then was this cup? Why was it not with the other cups in the kitchen cupboard or the china cabinet. (Wright in Beardsley, 94).

Again, the "child's eye view" is contrasted with that of a retrospective adult in order to underscore the gap between innocence and experience. Subsequently, we learn that the narrator's father, Buddy Wheeler (a minor leaguer) did not actually win the Stanley Cup, though he played briefly with a team (the Montreal Maroons) that did. It is also the story of a simpler place and time:

> In 1935 you could buy a Chevrolet Master Six for eight hundred and fifty-four dollars, and a cord of hardwood for twelve dollars. Someone named Ed would clean your chimney for seventy-five cents: Call Ed. Job guaranteed. The headline on the sports page for a Thursday in March of 1935 reads: "Wheeler Scores Three as Flyers Nip Port Edward 5-4"…There is a picture of my father standing in his hockey gear beside the team owner and manager, George W. Fowler, who has his arm around my father's shoulders. (98)

Surprisingly, this story does not focus on the narrator's father, but rather his mother, the lone heretic in congregation of hockey believers. She is a schoolteacher who is less than comfortable in the role of a hockey player's wife, or with a subculture that, as her son later observes, she must have found "both alien and fantastical" (101):

> It was a world in which men gathered to recall games and monkeyshines played yesterday or long ago; where mythic figures, renowned for body checks or organ size, were paraded forth in the telling. It was a rough gregarious male world of gags and practical jokes where women were mostly decorative. It was a world of play and irresponsibility….some of them ate glass, and others put their hands under their arms and made farting noises. Everything was for laughs, and the object of life, or so it seemed to my mother, *was never to grow up*. (101-102, emphasis added)

Here, the world of hockey presents itself as a kind of "Never-Never Land," where Lost Boys play on forever, exempt from the ravages of time and free of womanly interference.[6]

The Pond is Where the Heart is:

In other instances where retrospective narration is present the emphasis is primarily on the setting. “The Puck Artist” by Levi Dronyk (in Beardsley 61-75) is all about the rink, the same institution that Ken Dryden and Roy MacGregor elegise in *Home Game* as "the grand central gathering place for the young and the old" (15). The story "looks back" to the point in the narrator's life when he first experiences the revelation that is hockey:

> At the age of nine I discovered that I needed more than food and shelter. Yet I know nothing of purpose, of what was important to me…. Then I saw television. *Hockey Night in Canada.* (Dronyk, in Beardsley, 61)

Here the parallels with another nine-year-old, Draper Doyle Ryan, are obvious. The narrator even recalls the exact point at which he undergoes his transformation:

> It was at my uncle's, during the regular whiskey ritual he performed with the Oldman, while my aunt and mother sat apart from the men, knitting, chatting, and shaking their heads over each drink poured. (61)

Here too, we see the kind of gender divisions noted earlier in Schoemperlen's story, however the focus is less on family relationships, and more on the community at large. It is an organic community, one that transcends its divisions (of gender, ethnicity and class) and is bound together by a collective love of the "great winter game." The place is Blackwater, a small town in North Central Alberta, and the time is the apocalyptic year when, for pop singer-songwriter Don MacLean and others, "the music died":

> The back door slammed. Virgin Mary shook in her frame above my bed. But she was safe. I had her surrounded with hockey stars cut out of *Weekend Magazine*. Memorizing hockey cards and listening to the radio. The deejay mourned Buddy Holly, playing "That'll be the Day" yet again. It was Saturday, February 7th, 1957. (64)

As the child of poor, Ukrainian immigrant, parents, the narrator, Metro Krapko, cannot afford his own hockey equipment. However his determination to play the game is such that he improvises -- scrounging and borrowing from neighbours. The goal, centrepiece of his backyard rink, is made of two-by-fours and burlap sacks, but it proves sturdy enough to contain the pucks he shoots as he pretends to be a rookie with the Montreal Canadiens:

> Toe Blake tapped me on the shoulder. I hopped over the boards…I waited in the slot, gun loaded. Trigger impatient. *Bang.* Red light flashing behind the potato sacks. (63)

Farther on down the street is the more "upscale" Martinyuk rink complete with painted blue and red lines, where Metro goes to play with his friends Kenneth and Sharon, "a tough girl who was built like a linebacker and hit twice as hard" (64). Foremost among backyard rinks, however, is the rink built by "Blackjack" Lambert:

> It was approximately two-thirds regulation size….Talk about classy, the goals were of welded steel with nylon cord for the net. There were three strings of lights across the ice and floods at either end for night hockey. Blackjack Lambert, who played defence for the Blackwater Pontiacs built it all. That winter he'd added a shack, complete with benches and a potbelly stove. (66)

The Lambert rink is the scene of pick-up games of glorious "shinny hockey," first between ad hoc teams of younger boys and girls, and later, the older more serious teenagers, sometimes joined by Blackjack himself. The latter group includes the gifted Billy "The Kid" Semeniuk, who is Metro's idol, and whose tongue is as sharp as his skates:

> A "magic pirouette" is what Billy the Kid called it, the two revolution spin he did after scoring a goal.
>
> "Hey hotdog where's the mustard?" Blackjack invariably said.
>
> "I am ze puck artiste, mmmmm wah!"

> Sharon and I watched them play. I believe she identified with Blackjack, with his bulk and physical strength. I was with Billy the Kid all the way. He was the greatest. The Oil Kings were interested in him, but Billy didn't care. He was fifteen, nearly sixteen. He called the Oil Kings "sanctimonious puck busters."(67-68)

Later it becomes clear that Billy's seeming indifference to the lure of possible stardom is not based on false modesty, or fear of failure, but rather on his views about the real importance of hockey. He proselytises (semi-facetiously) that "any kid without an instinctive understanding of the game is genetically un-Canadian" (74):

> "Hockey's in our blood." Billy the Kid added.
>
> "So how come all of us ain't in the NHL," Robby wanted to know.
>
> "What I said, butternuts, is that we all have an understanding. Not everyone has the skills."
>
> "Big fuckin' deal." Pinka wasn't impressed.
>
> "But the game's losing its purity."
>
> "What!" Robby demanded.
>
> "Too much money. It's taking over."
>
> "Fuck off Semeniuk, it's a job, they gotta get paid."
>
> "I know. So it's no longer a game. And *all of us have to grow up*." Billy the Kid laughed, *but it wasn't a real laugh*. (74 emphasis added)

Dronyk's story portrays a vision of hockey and community that has been presented -- and contested-- elsewhere. According to Gruneau and Whitson, this kind of writing embraces "an idealized organic conception of hockey as a natural Canadian cultural resource, something that developed almost magically out of an exposure to ice, snow and open spaces" (26). It is a false vision, they argue, because it "leaves too much out of account and glosses over too many differences -- differences rooted in racial, ethnic, class and gender relations" (26).

While there is some truth to Gruneau and Whitson's charge of idealisation, there is also a dark side to many of these child-character/adult-narrator texts. At times the reader cannot help but be disturbed by the degree of discrepancy, at times even dissonance, between what the imbedded character sees and understands, and the contextual information --"hindsight" --provided by the restrospective narration. Thus the narrator of *The Age of Longing* reveals that his parents were ill-matched and possibly quite unhappy, and that even the "childish" world of hockey has an exploitative side (represented by the cigar-smoking owner/manager George Fowler). In "Hockey Night in Canada" adultery is hinted at, and in *The Divine Ryans,* protagonist Draper Doyle must come to terms with the fact that he has inadvertently precipitated the suicide of his secretly gay father. Although the arguments between Judith Fitzgerald's Doré and her irascible grand-père are fundamentally good-natured, the focus of their dispute (the Howe/Kennedy altercation) serves to remind the reader of hockey's ever-present potential to injure, maim --and even kill -- its own. Even in the almost idyllic example of "The Puck Artist," the allusions to popular music, and especially to the untimely death of one of its brightest stars, reinforce our awareness of our own mortality and the ephemeral quality of youth -- a theme that Billy the Kid later makes explicit.

The "Hockey in All of Us":

The prototypical hockey movie is almost certainly *Slapshot*, Although made in the 1970s, in a blackly comical way it anticipates and addresses much of what's "wrong" with hockey today: violence, greedy owners, sleazy managers, and especially the plight of small market franchises. (As we saw in the previous chapter, the television series *Power Play* picks up on many of these same themes.) However, despite the feature roles given three Canadian hockey players[7], *Slapshot* is an example of American popular culture, not Canadian, hence it is beyond the scope of this study. There are, however, two (quite different) Canadian/Québécois films, that represent hockey in ways that are relevant to the discussion here.

The NFB documentary film, *Shinny: The Hockey in All of Us* is a visually stunning homage to The Pond. Considering the beauty of the cinematography it is not surprising that *Shinny* won the Rockie Award in the Sports Program category at the 2002 Banff Film Festival. It has been said that in *Moby Dick* the sea is a character, and in *Shinny,* the ice (rink ice, lake ice, river ice, pond ice, even the frozen surface of the Arctic Ocean) is the clearly the "star."

Shinny is structured around the Twelve Rules of Shinny, including Rule Number One: "Make your own rules":

> Wherever and whenever shinny is played there are never any referees; players are always on their own honour and various unwritten codes of conduct prevail. It is left to the players themselves to work out things between them. Maybe this is why hockey players of an earlier era had a greater sense of sportsmanship than

> young players today…organized shinny is a contradiction in terms. (Beardsley CI 52)

The themes that are reiterated over the duration of the film have to do with the game's purity, inclusiveness, and (somehow) intrinsic "Canadian-ness": Other rules include Number Two: "You Always Play for Fun," and Number Five: "No team is ever really beaten."

> Shinny represents a uniquely Canadian pastime enjoyed by enthusiasts of all ages. Consider the statistics: an average of 16,000 hockey sticks are bought in Canada every day, according to the 1996 Canadian census, and hockey is played by about 1.4 million Canadians. Hey, even Wayne Gretzky plays shinny. (CNW)

The film takes us on a tour of various "shinny venues" throughout the country. We meet the ordinary folk and "everyday guys" who participate in the game -- not just the players, but also the parents who build backyard rinks, the "rink rats" who look after outdoor community rinks, people who scrounge, share, and donate equipment, and others. However, while Shinny is presented as the quintessentially democratic "people's game" it is in no way insurgent. Cameos by author Roch Carrier, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson and Prime Minister Jean Chrètien remind us that shinny has the blessing of Canada's cultural and political authority figures.

Shinny ends in Nunavut, in the village of Kuglugtuk, where the entire community is shown playing on the frozen Arctic Ocean (their "rink" is lit by snowmobile headlights). One of the goalies, an Inuit boy of about ten, is shown proudly wearing hockey equipment donated by a Toronto manufacturer, a kind “fairy godfather” figure. The background music not traditional -- e.g. throat singing-- but rather the hymn, Amazing Grace (although sung in Inuktitut) and one could argue that there is something a bit patronising about the charitable efforts of these well-intentioned southerners. However, this is not the point of view the film takes. Once again hockey (in its "pure" incarnation as shinny) is portrayed as transcending differences in order to build community. The final shot is a near duplicate of the opening one: landscape, snow, and ice. Technically complex, yet thematically simple, if *Shinny* is a naïve film it is so deliberately.

Buddies, Beer, and Bonding:

The 1997 Québécois film, *Les Boys,* produced by Richard Goudreau and directed by Louis Saia, is also about innocence, but handles the topic in a very different way. While *Shinny* received kudos from the Banff Festival, the only prize *Les Boys* captured was the hearts of Quebec audiences, and by spring 1998 this panegyric to recreational hockey and male bonding "had grossed nearly 5.7 million, making it in box-office terms the most popular Quebec film ever" (Marshall 203). Marshall attributes this phenomenal popularity to the fact that this "film of low cultural status provides what popular taste demand: participation and the abolition of distance" (203), noting that, as in the case of films like the *Rocky Horror Picture Show,* theatre audiences often actively responded to events happening in the film (applause when a goal is scored, etc.). While not quite a cult film, the commercial success of *Les Boys* ensured not just one sequel but several (*Les Boys II, III*, and *IV)*.

The opening scene(s) introduce the audience to some of the members of the team known as *Les Boys.* It also establishes that, although they only play "for fun," nothing is more important to these men than hockey:

> The team includes a cross-section of ordinary guys united by their passion for Canada's national sport. There's promiscuous movie director Bob…obnoxious cop Boisvert…fast-talking real estate agent Ti-Guy…good-looking young mechanic Mario…stoned-out hippie Julien…and gay lawyer Jean-Charles. (Kelly 60)

First we meet Jean-Charles as he agrees to a bad plea bargain, next we encounter surgeon Francois in the process of botching an operation, and finally we observe mechanic Mario and video-maker Bob as each turns down offers of sex (made by wife and girlfriend respectively) -- all to avoid being late for the game. Eventually they and the others meet at the rink, play and lose a game, and adjourn to the neighbourhood *brasserie* for beer, food, and even more beer.

The plot of *Les Boys* is not overly complex. Stan, the team manager:

> …contracts a gambling debt…[and] a deal is made whereby it all hangs on a hockey game which Stan's team has to win….After a brutal battle with the[opposing]team …(which includes ex-professionals), *Les Boys* win the match, which takes up the last third of the film, by one goal. (Marshall 203)

Thematically, *Les Boys,* like *Shinny,* is about overcoming difference to build community:

> significantly…victory is achieved not through an individual hero but through a team or community, and from the position of underdog, a staple of American films of this type, but one appropriate to Quebec identifications. (Marshall 203-204).

The climax comes when Jean-Charles scores the tying goal on a penalty shot, seconds after being 'outed" by his lover (who appears at the rink to cheer him on, waving a sign that reads "Jean-Charles, je t'aime"). There is little, if any, evidence of homophobia, in fact, in an earlier scene the film has gone out of its way to make Jean-Charles seem "manly" (Marshall 204). This assertion of homosocial bonding as being far more important than individual sexual orientation, is borne out by the fact that the few women shown in the film are depicted as either shrews or sex objects. Unlike *Shinny,* the inclusiveness of *Les Boys* is limited. Differences are transcended *within* the team, but reinforced outside its boundaries --it's the team against the rest of the world.

Marshall is correct in his observation that *Les Boys* is derivative of "the Hollywood subgenre of the sports film" (203). This perhaps explains why it also verges on the Disney-esque as the members of this bad-news beer league overcome obstacles to achieve improbable victories. In many ways *Les Boys* is a kind of francophone *Mighty Ducks*-for-adults. It may also be why, although *Les Boys* deals with controversial subject matter (homosexuality), reviewers have dismissed the film as light entertainment: "Les complex, *Les Boys* is not" (Thompson, *Toronto Sun*, April 16 1998). In a subsequent article the same reviewer adds:

> If you are thinking *Les Boys* makes *Slapshot* seem deep by comparison, you'd be right. *Les Boys* is ragged and rough, clichéd and corny and offensive. And misinformed. And it made me laugh anyway. (Thompson, *Toronto Sun,* April 17, 1998)

Les Boys is about "faux innocence" and the refusal to grow up. In the end, "les boys" are precisely that. Their identities as lawyers, police officers, musicians, mechanics, real estate salesmen, etc. are less important than their shared identity as "one of *Les Boys*." In some ways the streets of Montreal are not so far from The Pond after all.

Conclusion:

The age of innocence does not last forever. Hockey may be represented as the last remaining place where grown men can act like children, as in *The Age of Longing* and *Les Boys*.[8] Elsewhere, in narrative reconstructions of the past and childhood, hockey may be endowed with a kind of sanctity though (as we saw above) often these narratives have subtexts that are far from idyllic. But recall too, the "conscious fictionality of pastoral" (Blodgett 181). The subtext is there, yes, but it is suppressed . The probability that the "real" Billy Semeniuk will end up married and managing a hardware store, --or perhaps live up to his nickname ("the professor")-- does not matter. Metro's idol, the Puck Artist, will still remain, frozen in time, the teenaged god of hockey, sex, and rock 'n roll, eternally performing magic pirouettes in a small winter town where Buddy Holly is always on the radio, and hockey is more than a commodity.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1] (Wordsworth, in Norton 2279)

[2] (Wilson-Smith 44)

[3] Ovid wrote the work generally considered his masterpiece during a period (CE 8) when he was exiled by Caesar Augustus.

[4] Paul Rutherford identifies a similar phenomenon regarding the ways in which Canadians have traditionally "consumed" American culture. Drawing on data from an H.F. Angus survey done in the 1930s he notes that Canadian audiences saw Americans as "child-like," "money-mad," "lawless,"

"corrupt," "boastful" and "less-cultured" than were the "quieter, slower in tempo, and saner in quality" Canadians.

[5] Leslie McFarlane, writing under the pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon, is best known as the author of the *Hardy Boys* mystery series.

[6] There is a misogynistic thrust to the following conversation between Grace, the reluctant "hockey wife" and team manager Fowler (who has just learned of Grace's pregnancy):

> "Well, you two certainly didn't waste any time, did you?"
>
> Her look is so corrosive that Fowler is taken aback. It's as though he realizes that he has finally gone past an acceptable boundary with this woman.
>
> "Exactly what are you implying by that, Mr. Fowler?" Grace asks.
>
> *Implying!* It wasn't a word he was used to hearing from hockey players' wives in places like Huron Falls. In any case, George Fowler has had enough of Grace Wheeler and her snotty, schoolteacher ways. He smiles at her with amused dislike.
>
> "Oh I wasn't implying anything, Grace," he says. "I never imply anything. I just come right out and say it."
>
> He taps her empty glass.
>
> "Have another toddy and enjoy yourself. And come up to the arena some time and watch your husband play....Be a shame to hold a talented boy like that back." (Wright, in Beardsley 104)

[7] The players in question were Dave Hanson and Steve and Jeff Carlson. The (now-notorious) Hanson Brothers assume an even greater role in the recently-released *Slapshot II.*

[8] This is not as frivolous as it might seem. In the context of what Bruce Springsteen has referred to as "The Working Life," leisure represents "free" time, i.e. time that belongs to us as individual human beings, as opposed to employer owned and controlled time which we experience as alienated.

Chapter V. Myths and Heroes

"Myth...is a marriage of the past and the present."[1]

-John Ralston Saul

"Morenz, Joliat, Gagnon, Jackson, Smith –the whole lot of them are about the best artists this country ever turned out."[2]

-Hugh MacLennan

The Heroic Age is never the present, and heroes –some of them, at least-- are also revenants. This evocative French term for ghost (literally one who "comes again") calls to mind the destinies of once and future kings, and today, echoes of the *Mort D'Arthur* can be heard in the assertions of die-hard Montreal Canadiens fans: Howie Morenz and Rocket Richard *will* come again (if only in the guise of promising rookies from Trois Rivieres or Chicoutimi, Helsinki or Prague) and hockey's natural order will be restored. (If not this season, then surely the next). Until then, *je me souviens*. "In our memories, the Rocket will never stop skating, never stop scoring goals. We will hear 'Maurice Rocket Richard shoots ---he scores!' 'til the end of our lives" (Carrier OLWR 292).

The hero, as both figure and function, occupies a prominent place, not just in literature "proper," but in all cultural narratives (Miller 1-5). This notion of the larger-than-life individual, with superhuman attributes and a "date with destiny," exists in virtually all parts of the world, and persists across time and space. There is also a vast and weighty amount of scholarly and, in the view of some, not-so-scholarly[3] writing on the topic of the hero. According to Joseph Campbell, the hero is a "man of a thousand faces" (though, apparently, only one real gender) but while various schools of critical thought may apply different models and extract different meanings, a recognisable composite hero-figure emerges from their collective efforts, and there is a common pattern to heroic lives.

According to deVries, the typical Indo-European hero shares most if not all of the following traits: Traditionally male, "he" is half -divine; and half mortal (his mother is often a virgin; his father, a god or an animal). Sometimes his conception involves incest, and strange circumstances surround his birth. As a child, his welfare is threatened. He may be separated from his birth parents (lost, stolen, or given away) and thus his "true identity," and raised by foster parents (animals, shepherds, etc.) in humble circumstances. Despite these hardships, he manages to reveal his special talents at an early age (Hercules in his cradle strangling the serpents). He is almost, but not quite, invincible and whatever weakness he possesses (Achilles' heel, Sampson's hair, Siegfried's back) is carefully hidden. As Smith reminds us, usually a hero must go on a journey (25) or quest (Gilgamesh, Galahad) sometimes to the underworld (Aeneas) and invariably he performs great and dangerous deeds and, as a result, wins something (a kingdom, a fair maiden, a holy grail, etc.). Finally, heroes frequently die under unusual, (miraculous, mysterious, or tragic) circumstances and often at a young age (Jesus Christ, James Dean).

While many of the above characteristics have remained constant, representations of the hero have also changed over time. Victor Brombert, in his seminal anthology *The Hero in Literature*, comments on the protean persistence of the hero figure: "So long as man projects an image of himself in myth and art…the notion of the hero is certain to stay alive" (11) but adds that "the hero in the image of God is not the same as the hero in a Marxist, Freudian, or structuralist perspective"(16). In any given era, there are tensions between the diachronic and synchronic elements that constitute the figure of the hero, i.e. each hero possesses many of the same "inherited" characteristics, but each is to some extent, reshaped by the differing needs of his particular sociocultural context. Very early on we come to recognise that the epic hero is not the same as the hero of the medieval romance (hero as warrior vs. hero as artist/lover/magician). Later, the Byronic hero of the Gothic era "morphs" into the anti-heroes of post-war modernism (as things get nastier, Heathcliff dissolves into André Gide's Lafcadio, or Pinky from *Brighton Rock*). More recently, the advent of postmodernity and the "death of the (humanist) subject" has led many to question the very possibility of heroes. Heroes have been expanded, inverted and (supposedly) cancelled out.

At least this seems to be the case where high culture is concerned. In the domain of popular culture, however, heroes are very much alive and, in the specific case of hockey, still possess many of their traditional core attributes. More important to the discussion at hand, they also continue to perform many of their traditional mythic functions. I not think this is because popular culture is somehow less complex and more innocent, or its audiences more homogeneously naïve. As John Fiske (UPC

162) has pointed out, there is a good deal of discrimination (even irony and self-reflexivity) involved in the supposedly simplistic decoding of popular culture.

Typically heroes also occupy a special place in whatever society they belong to. They tend to function as exemplary, central figures in our *mythologies*, i.e. the cycles of stories that a tribe/group/community tells itself about who they collectively are. These myths are vehicles for exploring central cultural themes and issues. They may explain cultural origins, and/or legitimise the social, religious, and political order. Heroes, then, come out of the past, and if we step briefly into hockey's past, it is possible to identify four apocalyptic moments which stand out as myth–generating events for Canadian hockey, and each of the four is identified with a particular kind of hero.

Hockey's First Celebrity: Howie Morenz

The first of these events is the death of Montreal Canadiens player Howie Morenz. Morenz, known as "the Stratford Streak" was famous for his scoring ability (in 1928-29 he scored 44 goals in 48 games) but also for his speed, and finesse:

> Even more impressive than the number of his goals was the way he scored them. …he would fake to the outside, flip the puck between the defending players and leap between them to retrieve it…defenceman after defenceman was left gasping at the whir that had just gone by them.
>
> "He was the best," King Clancy…once said. "He could stop on a dime and leave you nine cents change. *He was in a class by himself.*" (Gzowski 123 emphasis added)

One can easily see that Howie Morenz possessed heroic characteristics. He was clearly an "exceptional individual," since he was without equal as a hockey player. And his celebrity status further separated him from his peers. By all accounts, it was role he loved and cultivated:

> Morenz loved hockey and kids and the racetrack… when he went to night clubs, as he often did he would sit at a table for hours, moving salt and pepper shakers around to show anyone who would listen --and dozens would--how the game had gone that night…whenever the car he was travelling in would pass a pick-up game of kids hockey, Morenz would jump out and join in, and sometimes on a Saturday afternoon he would just go downtown and shake hands. (Gzowski 124)

Morenz was glamorous, in the original sense of the term, and he was also a lover of fine clothing:

> All his life he dressed with taste and splendour, sporting spats, and changing his clothes two and three times a day. He was the definitive figure of the Roaring Twenties, pleased by the company of the fast and famous. There are pictures of him on visits to Chicago, waving from Al Capone's roadster, though no breath of gambling scandal ever touched his life. (Gzowski 124)

The fact that, after his death, Morenz's body was put on display at centre ice in the Montreal forum tacitly acknowledges the extent to which hockey can be seen as a kind of religion. Morenz belonged to [was "consumed" by] the audience one last time: [4]

> The funeral was the greatest outpouring of public grief the nation had ever expressed. The body lay in state at centre ice in the Forum, while Presbyterian

> ministers conducted the services. Outside 200,000 people stood in mourning as the coffin was borne through the streets of Montreal. (Gzowski 126)

The public display and showmanship involved in "presenting" Morenz to a mass audience of mourners calls to mind the funeral of matinee idol Rudolph Valentino a decade earlier:

> They had him propped up against a white satin pillow in a black tuxedo with extravagant lapels and a silk bow tie, under a dome of shatterproof glass; so much for souvenir hunting. They'd wound a rosary around his folded hands…and turned his head three quarters so he could share a slight conspiratorial smile with his visitors, amused by the ludicrous turnout, far better than any of his premieres…. There was the lacquered black hair, no gray in it, or dye, as why should there be at 31. (Estleman 7)

Like Valentino, Morenz died a "celebrity" death, and one that is congruent with the pattern of a heroic life. Not only did Howie Morenz die at a relatively early age (thirty-five); he also died under tragic circumstances. Why tragic? Because --and this is of enormous symbolic importance-- his injury (a leg broken in five places) would, in the 1930s, have ended Morenz' "life" *as a hockey player*. "Whatever the physiological causes [and to this day they are a mystery] …there are still men who believe that what killed him was a broken heart" (Gzowski 126). In sports mythology, meaningful existence ends when you can no longer play the game. Peter Williams explains, using baseball as an example:

> If a fine young pitcher loses his throwing arm to cancer, there is no ambiguity about his status; he is through; he is *mythically dead.* Fortunately, of course,

> there is the afterlife of Valhalla…Once again, Valhalla need not be the Hall of Fame itself; you can get there simply by *being permanently remembered as heroic.* (96 emphasis added)

Furthermore, heroes, as we've seen, don't retire -- they die; or rather they sacrifice themselves (or are sacrificed) for their communities.

Not surprisingly then, heroes and their associated mythologies feature prominently in texts about hockey. Earlier (Chapter III) we saw how, in *The Divine Ryans*, Wayne Johnston weaves the funeral of Howie Morenz into his narrative, plumbing the dream-depths of his protagonist's psyche, and finding there a corpse who is simultaneously the legendary Morenz and Draper Doyle's dead father, Donald Ryan. (The body, like that of Valentino, has his "hair slicked back" and possesses "a spectral handsomeness" (Johnston 124).) We may also recall that, in "The Return of Aurel Joliat," the elderly Joliat gains in stature due to his association with his long-dead line-mate Howie Morenz. Here, too, Morenz's funeral is evoked, along with the subsequent impact that his death had on Joliat:

> His body had lain in state at centre ice of the Forum -- the arena packed to capacity, observed an eerie total silence as twenty thousand people paid their respects, waiting together soundlessly for a last chance to experience Morenz's spell. Joliat had played another year before retiring.
>
> "He would look around him for someone to pass to," said Twitchell, "but no one could keep up with him." (Gowdey, in Beardsley 267-8)

Like Gilgamesh after the death of Enkidu, Aurel Joliat is left to wander alone in the desert. Unlike his "immortal" team-mate, he would live on to become an echo, a shadow, an ageing "ghost of his former self."[5] One recalls the words to the Prayer of Remembrance "they shall not grow old as we grow old," and figuratively speaking, Morenz did "fall in battle," laid low by an apparently "clean" hit from Chicago Blackhawk defenceman Earl Siebert (Gzowski 125).

Of all the ghosts that frequent the television series *Power Play* (discussed in Chapter III) the spectre of Howie Morenz is perhaps the saddest. He first appears to Brett Parker in episode thirteen as the latter is sitting in ""Duff"" McArdle's hospital room. ""Duff"" is in a coma of mysterious origin and Parker, who has just been fired from his job with the Steelheads hockey team, is convinced that he has lost everything. Frustrated, he is shouting at ""Duff"" to wake up and straighten things out, when the person in the next bed replies "I'm awake…you're howling loud enough to wake the dead." When asked to introduce himself, he replies that he is Howie Morenz, adding that: "I'm the fella that died for hockey. Broke my leg, and the doctors got ahold a me. They told me I'd never play again, so I up and died." At his point, Parker realises that he is speaking with (yet another) hockey ghost, and (rather flippantly) asks Morenz "what the message is." Morenz replies that "he doesn't know":

"I knew how to skate fast, think fast, move faster than man was meant to move. All it did was keep away the darkness. Keep away this thing behind me gnawing in the night." Morenz adds that Parker has the same problem. He also explains that the reason he died was that "he didn't know what to do with [his] time anymore." When Parker asks what he, Brett Parker, is supposed to do with his, Morenz remarks quietly: "I think you're supposed to fill it with love."

Later that night, Parker's soap-opera relationship with Colleen Blessed is finally consummated. However, to his amazement, in the aftermath of their night of passion she refuses to offer him his job back. As far as Parker is concerned, things have gone from bad to worse, and when Morenz appears to him again, in the following episode, he reproaches him for "screwing up" his life. Morenz relates a story about how he tried to get out of his first professional hockey contract because he had a secure job working for the CNR in Stratford. When Parker points out that maybe he should have stayed with the railroad since hockey killed him, Morenz corrects him forcefully:

"It's not the dyin' that counts, it's the livin'. I got to live fuller, faster, and better than any man ever dreamed." He then reminds Parker that life doesn't offer guarantees, only possibilities, and that it's foolish to be "scared of the possibilities."

The anthology *Original Six,* edited by Paul Quarrington, includes a story about a contemporary of Morenz's who also died young, and in his prime as a hockey player. (Bidini, in Quarrington, 10-33). Bidini describes how, in 1934, goaltender Charlie Gardiner of the Chicago Blackhawks endured a then -unheard-of five periods of intense struggle to win the Blackhawks their first Stanley Cup. Unfortunately, the thirty-year-old goalie's triumph is short-lived for (in the words of the first-person narrator) "six weeks later on a fine spring's day, the infection in my tonsils would take a deathgrip on my body and spread quickly to my brain, killing me easily in a brightly lit hospital in St. Boniface, Manitoba" (31). Other "Doomed (hockey) Youths" who come to mind are Bill Barilko, whose death in a plane crash came shortly after his Stanley Cup winning goal for the Toronto Maple leafs in 1951, and another former Leaf star, car accident fatality Tim Horton. The latter has been immortalised (prosaicly through a chain of donut shops) but also in a poem by John B. Lee entitled "Under a Hockey Moon" that begins with the line "The fast car blasts against the abutment like a Technicolor sneeze" (38). More recent examples of untimely death also tend to involve random events directly or indirectly resulting from the fast "celebrity" lifestyle.

A (Super)Man of the People: Maurice Richard

The prototype may be Howie Morenz, but the paradigmatic hockey hero is still Maurice "the Rocket" Richard. Morenz died when Maurice Richard was sixteen, and so the torch was passed. Although Richard was long retired at the time of his death from cancer in May of 2000, he too lay in state (not in the Forum, but rather in the soulless new Molson Centre; an arena in which Richard had never played a game[6]) and, like Morenz, was mourned by thousands. In the words of one commentator: “many remember him as a hero, but were too young to have seen him play” (CBC radio newscast, May 29, 2000). Again, there was the procession through the streets of Montreal, this time to the Catholic church (*Notre Dame de Montréal*) that would later that year witness the funeral (also televised) of another famous Québécois, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau.[7] Outside the cathedral, fans waved flags and banners, some of which combined the Canadian flag, the Quebec provincial flag, and the official "CH" logo of the Montreal Canadiens. A further resonance resulted from the fact that Richard's funeral was held during the same week as the official re-interment, in Ottawa, of Canada's Unknown Soldier, an actual (if anonymous) war victim who had been killed at Vimy Ridge. Governor General Adrienne Clarkson's comment at the ceremony, "he has become part of us forever; we are part of him”

(CBC Radio, May 29 2002) could have been applied to "the Rocket" as well. Meanwhile, the Canadian media gleefully recorded that our neighbours to the south expressed misplaced consternation at the untimely death of "Russian Rocket" Pavel Bure, and had to be reassured that the then Florida Panthers' star was (still) alive and well!

"The Rocket" was also the focus of the second myth-generating moment, i.e. Richard's suspension by then-NHL commissioner Clarence Campbell and the ensuing "Richard Riots" of March 17, 1955. What had started out as an on-ice dispute four days earlier (involving Richard, Boston defenceman Hal Laycoe, and the officials) rapidly became something more, and Campbell's subsequent harassment by irate fans caused the authorities to cancel the game after the first period. They could not, however, cancel the outrage:

> The troubles spilled out of the Forum with the crowd, and through much of the night people went on a rampage in downtown Montreal, hurling bricks through windows, over-turning streetcars, setting bonfires…. The city boiled with anger until Richard himself went on the air and asked people to calm down. "I will take my punishment," he said, his eyes burning out of the television screen. "I would ask everyone to get behind the team." (Gzowski 129)

As Gzowski and others have noted, this event came to symbolise nascent Québécois nationalism:

> The Richard riot, as the events of March 1955 came to be called, was, if not the beginning of the Quiet Revolution that was to change Quebec society in the 1960s and 1970s, then at least an important event in its development. Like the

> Asbestos strike, which brought together such political figures as Gerard Pelletier and Pierre Elliot Trudeau, then a professor of law at the University of Montreal, or like the bitter strike of radio and television producers against the CBC, the Richard Riots seemed, to its participants at least, to set the French *peuple* -- represented in this case by fiery Maurice -- against the hated English bosses, as symbolized by the elegant anglophone Campbell. (Gzowski 129-130)

Gzowski's account is corroborated by Roch Carrier, who comments on the context of the riots, and the way that unjust officiating seemed to mirror greater societal injustices:

> It's the same old story: an opponent does something reprehensible and the victim, Maurice Richard, is punished. Not the assailant. The fans' fury is rising, They recite whole rosaries of the injustices the Rocket has suffered...
>
> "You can't say the Rocket was right to do what he did, but you can't blame him, either."
>
> "Time after time you put up with these things, but you can't put up with them forever."
>
> The Rocket responds to injustice: "He shoots, he scores." One day the French Canadians will rise up. All the Clarence Campbells who head the NHL, the textile mills, modern hotels, factories, finances and the government will realize that French Canadians no longer want to be a "people on their knees." (Carrier OLWR 218-219)

This identification, which Carrier documents meticulously in Our *Life With The Rocket*, can be also be found in what is perhaps the most famous hockey story of all, "The Hockey Sweater":

> We all wore the same uniform as he, the red white and blue uniform of the Montreal Canadiens, the best hockey team in the world; we all combed our hair in the same style as Maurice Richard.... We laced our skates like Maurice Richard; we taped our sticks like Maurice Richard. We cut all his pictures out of the papers. Truly, we knew everything about him. (Carrier HS, in Beardsley 15)

In this story, there is no worse fate than that which befalls the ten-year-old narrator, when he is compelled to wear the "blue and white sweater with a maple leaf on the front -- the sweater of the Toronto Maple Leafs" (16).

Why is Maurice Richard so important to the youth of this small, rural, Quebec community? Is it simply because he is the best hockey player in their world? One suspects not. Although there is no explicit reference to Québécois nationalism in this story, it is present as a subtext. The source of the problem is, after all, a (possibly mischievous) catalogue substitution made by the *Anglais* Monsieur Eaton. Furthermore, the penultimate comment, made by the young vicar, is a telling one:

> "My child," he said, "just because you're wearing a new Toronto Maple Leafs sweater unlike the others, *it doesn't mean you're going to make the laws around here*.... Now take off your skates and go to the church and ask God to forgive you." (17, emphasis added)

Ostensibly, the narrator must ask forgiveness for losing his temper, but there is a clear suggestion that his real transgression has to do with the detested emblem he is wearing on his back. It seems only appropriate, then, that he prays -- not for forgiveness -- but for "moths that would eat up my Toronto Maple Leafs sweater" (17). (Presumably the francophone Catholic God whom he is petitioning would not be unsympathetic.)

The issue of religious sectarianism vis-à-vis the Toronto/ Montreal hockey rivalry also surfaces in *The Divine Ryans.* Although the late Donald Ryan, Uncle Reginald, and of course, Draper Doyle, are all staunch hockey fans, for the rest of the family *Hockey Night in Canada* serves a rather different purpose:

> Aunt Phil, Sister Louise, and Father Seymour were already in the living room when we got there. None of them had any real affection for hockey. As far as they were concerned, God had created hockey for the sole purpose of allowing Catholics to humiliate Protestants on nationwide TV....Despite the fact that the Ryans and the Barters [a local protestant family] had never spoken to each other, it had somehow become the custom that after each televised game between the Habs and the Leafs, the family whose team had won would phone the family whose team had lost, not to speak to them, of course, but only to let their phone ring three times -- three rings, three gloating cheers. Just as the Americans and the Russians had the hotline, the Ryans and the Barters had what Uncle Reginald called "the knellephone," their only cold war communication. (Johnston 76-77)

In his short story, "The Montreal Canadiens." Johnston sums up how semiotically saturated (and hence, eminently appropriatable) Maurice Richard really was, especially when contrasted with his nemesis Clarence Campbell:

> On one side of the desk, I see the son of a Gaspé machinist; himself a machinist by training; a mythically talented hockey player who is living out his lifelong

> dream of playing for the Montreal Canadiens; an authority-defying, discipline-abhorring temperamental renegade; a Catholic; a francophone. On the other side of the desk, his desk in his office on his floor of the Sun-Life building, towering symbol of English-dominated Montreal, I see an Oxford-educated lawyer, a Rhodes scholar, a failed hockey player, a one-time referee, a former Nuremberg prosecutor, an authoritarian, a disciplinarian, a Protestant anglophone, the very epitome of urbane rectitude and propriety.... (Johnston, in Quarrington 45-6)

Identifications, not just of ethnicity and religion, but also class, attached themselves to Maurice Richard. The latter aspect of the Richard persona is brought out in the short story "I'm dreaming of Rocket Richard" by Clark Blaise. The narrator, nicknamed "Curette," or "Little Priest" is the old-before-his-time son of a lower working class Montreal family:

> I was always industrious. That's how it is with janitors' sons. I had to pull out the garbage sacks, put away tools, handle simple repairs, answer complaints about heat and water when my father was gone or too drunk to move. He used to sleep near the heating pipes on an inch-thick, rust-stained mattress under a Sally Ann blanket. He loved his tools; when he finally sold them I knew we'd hit bottom. (Blaise, in Beardsley 31)

For Curette, hockey is a transcendent experience, one that takes him beyond the material and spiritual poverty of his daily life:

> But the ice of big-time hockey, the old Forum, that went beyond landscape! Something about the ghostly white of the ice under those powerful lights, something about the hiss of the skates if you were standing close enough, the

> solid *pock-pock* of the rubber on a stick and the low, menacing whiz of a Rocket slapshot hugging the ice -- there was nothing in any other sport to compare with the *spell* of hockey. (32)

Yet, paradoxically, this magical realm was also a world to which he had access, and which somehow "belonged" to him:

> When I went to the Forum to watch the Canadiens play hockey, I wore a Boston Bruins sweatshirt. That was way back, when poor people could get into the Forum and Rocket Richard scored fifty goals in fifty games. Despite the letters on the sweatshirt, I loved the Rocket. I loved the Canadiens fiercely. It had to do with the intimacy of old-time hockey, how close you were to the gods on the ice; you could read their lips and hear them grunt as they slammed the boards. So I stood there in my Boston Bruins shirt loving the Rocket. (Blaise, cited in Beardsley 30)

Similarly, for Wayne Johnston, the fictionalised Rocket of his short story is someone who stands against power and privilege and for a "level playing field" -- or rather, rink:

> …it seemed to me that, for him, this was the point of playing hockey, to forget himself completely, immerse himself totally in a world in which merit, strength, talent and courage could prevail, a world in which to have been well born or have important parents or influential friends was of no advantage whatsoever. (Johnston in Quarrington 41)

What about the "real" Rocket? Did he live up to the symbolic power invested in him by the many fans who loved him, and the few who loved to hate him? Speaking of the Richard Riots, Peter Gzowski reminds us that the Rocket was a hero for --but not necessarily *of* -- his time:

> ...if there was a historical significance to the events it did not interest the man at their middle, the Rocket. He was a hockey player. He was as gifted and dedicated as anyone who had ever played the game, but he used his gifts and dedication to score goals, not political points. However others might see him, during the riots of 1955 or the *independentist* campaigns of the 1970s, this was how he saw himself, no more, but certainly no less. (130)

Cold War Cowboys: The Summit Series

The third apocalyptic event and one that has, of late, proven to be especially susceptible to mythologising, is the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and Russia. Because Canadians in general (as distinct from "hardcore" hockey fans and sports *aficionados*) are becoming more self-conscious about our "national" game, greater attention is being paid to this defeat of the Soviet Union as a triumphalist moment in Canadian cultural history. The series as a whole has been flattened out, reduced to a kind of teleological backdrop for one singular event: the game-- and series-- winning goal by Paul Henderson.

To understand how, and why, the Summit Series achieved mythic status, it is necessary to look more closely at the context in which the tournament took place. Only five years had passed since Expo 67, Canada's official 100th birthday party. Man of the hour, Pierre Trudeau, was Prime Minister and, despite the ominous events of the October Crisis, the country was in an optimistic mood. To many, the "Just Society" seemed a real possibility. On the hockey front, 1972 witnessed the formation of the

World Hockey Association (McFarlane 112), which provided a much-needed challenge to the monopoly exercised by the National Hockey League. It also saw the retirement of two of the game's greatest stars, Gordie Howe and Jean Beliveau , although the former would return the following year to play for the Hartford Whalers of the WHA.[8]

Within the NHL itself, expansion (presided over by then-Commissioner, Clarence Campbell) had taken place a few years earlier (1967-68) and six new franchises, all in American cities, were added to the "original"[9] half-dozen. "The omission of Vancouver, which rankled many Canadians, was excused on the grounds that Vancouver would add no new television audience" (McFarlane 78). However, despite the NHL's ever-increasing focus on the American market, hockey was still considered a predominantly Canadian game and, except for a handful of individuals, the players themselves were Canadian.

One of the ongoing criticisms of the NHL has to do with that league's negative impact on Canadian amateur hockey. Bruce Kidd and John McFarlane have documented the dilemma in *The Death of Hockey.* They point out that, at one time, Canada was able to consistently field internationally competitive amateur teams: "In the early years [1920s through to the 1952 Olympics in Oslo, during which the gold medal in hockey was won by the Edmonton Waterloo Mercurys] whichever team won the Canadian senior amateur championship Allan Cup was unbeatable overseas" (74). They add that:

> Canada's domination of these early series was only natural. In those days the English won the soccer games, the Finns the distance races. Although

> Europeans had played hockey or something like it for centuries, Canadians refined the game, perfected its skills and invented its equipment. (In the 1938 world tournament in Prague, 181 of the 185 players wore Canadian-made skates, and 166 used Canadian-made sticks.) Hockey was our specialty....Canadian supremacy in world hockey continued after the [Second World] war, despite growing competition from Czechoslovakia. (Kidd and McFarlane 75)

Then, in 1954, Canada was defeated 7-2 by the Soviet Union, in the latter's first entry into the world hockey championships. Worse still, the loss occurred during the height of "McCarthy Era" anticommunist paranoia, and resulted in a kind of national moral panic:

> The Canadian Public was shocked. Editorial writers bewailed our lost pride. Conn Smythe offered to take the Maple Leafs to Europe "immediately" to avenge Canada's fallen reputation....Communities began strengthening their Senior "A" teams as if preparing for religious wars.... (Kidd and McFarlane 76)

While Kidd and McFarlane acknowledge that many factors have led to the decline of Canadian amateur hockey, they stress that, from 1952 on, Canada's poor performance in international competition can, in large part, be blamed on the NHL: "If a boy was a promising hockey player, the NHL would simply buy him away. The costs of maintaining a senior team were becoming prohibitive" (Kidd and McFarlane 77).

The Death of Hockey also details the attempts, on the part of the Canadian amateur hockey community (most notably Father David Bauer), to rebuild a strong national team during the 1960s, and the innumerable ways that these efforts were thwarted by "lack of co-operation" from the NHL. What Kidd and McFarlane do not discuss is the ongoing frustration experienced by Canadian fans during the 50s and 60s as they watched "their" teams grow weaker. David Adams Richards, who was a hockey-mad schoolboy during the period in question, does:

> I knew something was strange in how others viewed Canadians.... I did not quite know how to explain it. We were the best, and yet it seemed, after Squaw Valley, after Belleville losing to the Czechs and after the 4-0 loss to the Swedish team by the Trail Smoke Eaters that something very fundamental in our nature was missing. We were cocky hockey players, but we were indentured [i.e. to the NHL].... I was flooded with memoried pain of my [American] uncle and his son, coming to our house, and telling us about how great the Russians were, and then having the audacity to go out and beat us. (HD 125-126)

Nevertheless, as Jack Ludwig makes clear, Canadians believed that if only our best players were allowed to play, things would be very different:

> All our waking lives we've known that let Canada put a team of two NHL All-Star goalies together with six NHL All-Star defencemen and ten or twelve of the best All-Star forwards ...and the "greatest hockey team ever assembled" would indeed be a reality. (Ludwig 18)

No wonder there was such a sense of excitement when it became apparent that this "real" world hockey championship would actually take place. No wonder, too, that there was trepidation, when it also became evident that the Soviet team was very, very good. Prior to the start of the series, sports journalists and other members of the "hockey establishment" had predicted a rout. According to Foster Hewitt, Canada was "two goals a game better. It looks like 8-0 Canada" (quoted in Ludwig 32). After the shocking defeat in the first game --"*Le Canada Ecrasé 7-3*" read the headline in the Montreal *Sunday Express* (Ludwig 43)--the reaction was predictable:

> Our myth was shattered. Our one great dream was gone. Ukrainians and Argentinians might steal our illusions about wheat and we would survive: but *what were we going to be* now that our one certainty was taken from us? Hockey! Our thing! Maybe our only thing…(Ludwig 43, emphasis added)

For David Adams Richards, the fact that the Canadian Team not only lost the first game, but subsequently fell behind in the series was something that made him feel "ill" (HD 201). He recollects that:

> At home it might as well have been September of 1939…. My uncle was in town from Boston that month, and he looked at me, I believe, with a good deal of sadness…. He had to leave soon after the fifth game, and the games weren't shown in the United States. It was *their* NHL -- *their* greatest players. But what did it matter to them?
>
> "We will win," I said, shaking his hand at the driveway.
>
> "Why do you think you will win?" he asked. He must have thought I was crazy.
>
> "Because we *have* to," I said. And I turned and walked back to the house. (HD 203)

The Canadian team did manage to win the series, although not until the last few seconds (19:26) of the eighth and final game. Regrettably, the victory was tainted by poor sportsmanship on the part of some Canadian players (notably Phil Esposito and Bobby Clarke) as well as team management (notably John Ferguson and Alan

Eagleson). Then, too, there was the Cold War bombast: " It was our society against theirs, and as far as we were concerned it was a damn war!" (Phil Esposito, quoted in Morrison 17).[10] However, Ken Dryden, one of only three[11] Canadians who stayed on the ice to congratulate the Soviets after Canada's humiliation in the first game (Ludwig41) stated that the most important thing about the Summit Series was that it was good for hockey:

> ...the feeling seems to have changed to an awareness that the Russians have something going too. Now there seems to be an appreciation for discipline and passing and skating, and at the same time, there is a questioning of the old NHL standards of conditioning and preparedness. Both the Russians and the Canadians have an amazing amount to learn. (Dryden FS 185)

Dryden's view was supported by another great hockey player, former Soviet centre Boris Mikhailov who observed that "it was a meeting between two schools of hockey and we have learned from each...taking the best of both styles. That's the most important result of the series..."(quoted in Morrison 21). Gruneau and Whitson also point out that "over the course of the 1970s, Canadian hockey did begin to change...as a result of contact between the NHL and European teams" (263).

But for Canadian fans the win was "a rebirth of something that had almost died" (Ludwig 179). It was perceived as both a vindication for previous losses, and validation of ourselves as a national community. "In about the only category left to Canadians to shout 'We're Number One' in, hockey, Canadians realized that terrible, silly but important urge" (Ludwig 179). Author Jack Ludwig, in Moscow to watch and write about the game, describes the scene after the Henderson goal: "In those final seconds it was tour's end, wedding anniversary, christening, bar mitzvah, birth, birthday, New Year's Eve, carnival, Day of Misrule -- yes, and the Dieppe that ended with V-E Day" (177)!

* * * *

Who, finally, were the heroes of the Summit Series? At the time, Paul Henderson was represented as a hero, as was Alan Eagleson[12]. The former scored the winning goal. The latter stage-managed and "spun" the series in the media, turning up the dial on the "Us vs. Them" Cold War rhetoric (heroes are often warriors, after all) and making sure that the team (and especially Alan Eagleson) was never far from the headlines. However despite Eagleson's efforts, the publicity (as we saw above) was not always good, and on at least two occasions, Canadian fans booed their own teams, not just for losing games, but also for their "slashy bush play" (Ludwig 37). Today, Alan Eagleson has been thoroughly discredited, while Paul Henderson -- because of The Goal-- has ascended to heights well beyond anything he ever expected (Morrison 201-202) since he was not an outstandingly skilled or talented hockey player. Although Henderson has received the official sanction of the myth-making machine (his image on a postage stamp) in a way, he too is a dubious candidate.

If not Paul Henderson, then who? Arguably, the Summit Series can be seen as an instance where the true heroes are team as a whole. There are other instances of team-heroes (e.g. the Argonauts, the Seven Against Thebes; the Seven Samurai, the Magnificent Seven etc.) including the "dynasty" teams of hockey (e.g. The New York Islanders; the Edmonton Oilers; and the dynasty *par excellence*, the Montreal

Canadiens). Speaking of how we, as Canadians, relate to both hockey and heroes, John Ralston Saul asserts that:

> There have always been great players, and they have had something heroic about them. But both they and the public have seen the game for what it is -- a profoundly cooperative experience. The great teams have been just that, teams. (143)

In a similar vein, Gaile McGregor suggests that:

> While the American's greatest fear is the loss of identity consequent upon acquiescence to social definition, the Canadian, it seems…believes that it is in terms of social definition that he is most likely to find himself. (436)

Both Saul and McGregor are guilty of generalisations, but the difficulties of discussing a social phenomenon such as how Canadians react, *en masse,* to symbolic culture, are manifest. Bear in mind Alan Eagleson's astonishingly accurate prediction that "we [i.e. Canadians] remember where we were when: President Kennedy was shot; the first man walked on the moon; and Paul Henderson scored the winning goal in the 1972 series" (Morrison 34). Eagleson, of course, focuses on individual achievement (the goal). I prefer to give the last word to David Adams Richards: "Certain people will always make more excuses about why we won that series than they would have if we'd lost. But I will tell you --we were and are better, then and now. It is everyone's game -- yet it is *ours* (HD 212 emphasis in text).

The Hero as Commodity: Wayne Gretzky

If the Summit Series can be characterised as being about the hero as a collectivity, then the sale of Wayne Gretzky can be read as an example of the hero as a commodity. In the summer of 1988, the Edmonton Oilers traded the young man believed by many to be greatest player to have ever played the game. Ostensibly a "trade," this event can be thought of as a sale for two reasons: first, as a player Gretzky's value was incommensurable to that of any other player(s). Second, the amount of money that Oilers owner, Peter Pocklington received for his star player was, in 1988, unprecedented in the history of the NHL.

The Gretzky trade was also an event that provoked both outrage and anxiety and led to the (further) hypostatizing of hockey as cornerstone of Canadian identity. Steven Jackson argues that this "identity crisis" was largely the product of a manipulative media who saw "another chance to link the cultural hysteria created by the Free Trade Debate with a prominent cultural form namely hockey" (Jackson 438):

> Not only did the press conference to announce the deal interrupt regularly scheduled television programming on Canadian television, it was also noted that the trade was the biggest headline for the *Edmonton Journal* newspaper since the end of World War II…The following headlines typify the media reaction: "Defection of 'National Treasure' Stuns Fans, Players, Executives" (*Globe & Mail*, August 10, 1988, pp. 1-2); "Grieving for the Great One" (*Vancouver Sun,* August 13, 1988, p. B-1); and "A Nation in Mourning" (*Sports Illustrated,* August 22, 1988, p. 94). (Jackson 438)

It is certainly true that the media played a role in magnifying and even distorting[13] the events surrounding the trade (Jackson 438). They did not, however construct a crisis, as it were, out of "whole cloth." There really was a spontaneous groundswell of public indignation, because, as Gretzky himself said later "to some Canadians I was just one more thing the Americans had stolen" (Gretzky 196, quoted in Jackson 439). Through vehicles such as letters-to-the-editor, on-street interviews, and radio talk shows, Edmontonians and others expressed their outrage, and denounced the already-unpopular Pocklington.[14] In the *Edmonton Journal* Wednesday August 10, 1988, one irate fan declared that "Peter Pocklington would sell his mother is the price were right. He ought to be tarred and feathered and run out of town." Another opined that while "Mr. Pocklington owns the team and he can do whatever he wants…he has no soul to sell the unsellable. I'm sick." Some described the trade as more shocking "than last year's tornado." Terms like "devastated" and phrases such as "it's like a death in the family" and "it's like ripping the heart out of a city" abounded. One Oiler supporter went so far as to destroy five year's worth of memorabilia as a protest against the trade.

The trade even inspired poetry. The excerpt below is from "The Trade that shook the Hockey World" by John B. Lee:

> When Gretzky went to L. A.
> My whole nation trembled
> Like hot water in a tea cup when a train goes by.
>
> Something about Hollywood and hockey.
> Something about Canadians in Babylon.
> Something about gold and the gilded blades of grace….
> Something about the myth of boys and the truth of men.
> Something about beer in the holy grail.
> Something about the commodity of the human heart.
> Something about the fast life…
> But mostly something about moving too fast in time. (36)

Perhaps saddest of all is the fact that, while the trade may have benefited Wayne Gretzy financially, and possibly improved the quality of his personal and family life, it put a damper on the career of the world's greatest hockey player. Journalist Cam Cole, writing in the immediate aftermath of the event. predicted correctly that "Wayne Gretzky would never kiss a Stanley Cup again, or pose between the Art Ross and Hart trophies...The battle [between Gretzky and rival Mario Lemieux] is over. The rest is a rerun of Marcel Dionne playing out the string...." *(Edmonton Journal*, Wednesday August 10, 1988 H/1)

Why was the loss of Wayne Gretzky perceived as such a blow to the Canadian psyche? Gruneau and Whitson suggest that perhaps it is, at least in part, because there is a mythical dimension to almost everything about him:

> Gretzky is both the working-class boy who made good and the Canadian who made it onto the huge stage of the American entertainment industry. Indeed, the Gretzky story is one of "making it" in so many ways that even the dream merchants of "boys' own" fiction could scarcely have made it up. In Wayne Gretzky, life surpasses the normal limits of fiction. (134)

The above has a definite "Horatio Algerish" cast to it, but although Gruneau and Whitson note that "the themes of possessive individualism and upward mobility through skill and hard work" (135) are present, they point out that, when it comes to Wayne Gretzky, there are also those who bracket their cynicism about the current state of professional hockey:

> We've talked to people who say they've seen something in Gretzky's performance that dramatizes the importance of reconciling individual artistry

> with broader collective needs. They say that through a combination of unselfish play, magnificent individual skills, and a remarkable sensitivity to teammates' styles and abilities, Gretzky has shown how, even for a superstar, "making it" can be viewed as a collective project. (135)

In hindsight, the Gretzky trade can also be seen as the first of many changes that have occurred to the sport of hockey since 1988. At that time, the amount paid for Gretzky seemed enormous but today even "journeymen" players receive salaries in the millions of dollars. It is now possible for a handful of wealthy franchises (with the exception of Toronto, all of them American) to buy enough talent to virtually guarantee that they will win the Stanley Cup. When the trade occurred, much noise was made by the NHL about how Wayne Gretzky would promote hockey in the US, and what a great "boost" this would be for the game. What was not said then, but has become clear in the time since, is that it would also mean the end of hockey franchises in Quebec City and Winnipeg. It is very likely that in the next decade, NHL hockey will disappear from other Canadian cities, including Edmonton, the only city where Wayne Gretzky ever won a Stanley Cup.

* * * *

Much has changed in the fourteen years since Wayne Gretzky was passed (like an object) across the undefended border to the Los Angeles Kings. Today, many formerly heart-stricken Oilers fans recall the event with a kind of numbness, in part I think because Gretzky himself has moved on to "life after hockey." As mentioned earlier, proper heroes --even hockey heroes-- die (symbolically if not literally) stepping out of time, disappearing from the public gaze, having remained true to themselves (i.e. their role as heroes). They don't (as did Gretzky and Mario Lemieux) become owners of NHL franchises. However, Gruneau and Whitson remind us that "over the past thirty years or so, and especially during the 1980s, the dominant form of story-telling in and around the game seems to have become increasingly dominated by the language and the imperatives of marketing" (137). Is it now possible for Gretzky to bring glamour to the historically unsavory role of NHL owner[15] or (as I suspect many hockey lovers fear) will that role -- on top of frequent appearances in such things as Mcdonalds advertisements -- diminish the stature of Wayne Gretzky?

All this suggests that, where "The Great One" is concerned, we are witnessing (however reluctantly) the "devolution" of a hero, or at least a transformation. Can we conclude, then, that the Gretzky myth is currently under erasure? This seems unlikely given the amount of textual material that exists, including innumerable home video tapes of Oilers games, as well as the craving that many fans have today for hockey played in the style of the 1980s. Everytime we watch a film like *The Boys on the Bus* or read a book like *The Game of Our Lives,* it is the "real" Gretzky of today who (cigar and all) suddenly fades from our vision, replaced by the image of a skinny kid, "quick as a whisper" (Gzowski 35) who made magic happen on the ice. We remember how it was, and how much of how it was, was Wayne Gretzky.

The Black Knight of Hockey: Eddie Shore

For every White Knight there must be a Black Knight, and hockey has had its fair share of these as well. However by far the most memorable and most mythologised of hockey anti-heroes is Eddie Shore: "A throwback's throwback, Eddie Shore [made] Ted Lindsay look like a pussycat and Philadelphia's 'Broadstreet Bullies' look like so many ballerinas" (Cruise and Griffiths 166). Shore was a Saskatchewan farm boy who, when told he was "too stupid" to succeed in hockey, "systematically made himself into a hockey player. Even when the temperature dropped to minus thirty degrees and the wind cleaved off the prairies, a solitary figure would drive up and down the ice far into the night" (Cruise and Griffiths 168). His hard work and almost fanatical determination eventually led to success when Shore, a contemporary of Howie Morenz, was signed by the Boston Bruins in 1926.

Eddie Shore was a great skater with genuine offensive talent. He won the Hart trophy four times, and made the NHL All-Stars team eight times (Cruise and Griffiths 167), but it was his toughness that made him legendary. According to one writer it was Shore's "... almost psychopathic urge to excel...and eerily inhuman lack of concern for personal safety" (Cruise and Griffiths 169) that enabled him to become the NHL's most feared enforcer. Also, Eddie Shore became a "legend in his own time" (as did each of Morenz, Richard, and Gretzky). A writer of the day compared him to Cesare Borgia, and commented that Shore had "developed the role of Villain to such an extent that professional wrestlers gnash their teeth with envy" (Cruise and Griffith 166-167). Shore's own team management, as well as that of other teams, was quick to both exploit Shore's "villainy" and contribute to his celebrity/notoriety. On one occasion the head of Madison Square Garden hired a fleet of ambulances to drive to the arena "with sirens blaring and lights flashing" (Cruise and Griffiths 167) to advertise the fact that the Boston Bruins --and Eddie Shore-- were in town. Another time, Bruins manager Art Ross:

> ...kept his star in the locker room until both teams were on the ice. A spotlight then hit the players' entrance as a brass band struck up "Hail To The Chief." After a suspense-building pause, Shore appeared, clad in a richly colourful matador's cape. Behind him stood a fully liveried manservant who gently eased the cape off his shoulders. (Cruise and Griffiths 172)

Eddie Shore's reputation was not, however, all "hype." He was responsible (he insisted, inadvertently) for one of the most serious hockey injuries on record, the 1933 hit against Toronto Maple Leaf player "Ace" Bailey:

> "Bailey went down hard," an eyewitness observed. "his head struck the ice with a loud, dull, sickening thud. You could hear it up in the peanut gallery. You could feel it in the pit of your stomach. You knew the man stretched out on the ice, his limbs quivering convulsively, was really hurt." (Cruise and Griffiths 170-171)

In 1940, Shore retired from playing hockey to spend "the next twenty-six years as the owner, coach, trainer, team doctor and sometime seer of the Springfield Indians" (Cruise and Griffiths 176). Eddie Shore was also legendary in this capacity as "the players on his teams came to be every bit afraid of him as any opponent ever was" (Cruise and Griffiths 176). One of these players was none other than Don Cherry who recalls that:

> The idea of being traded to Springfield was so scary that when players signed contracts (with other teams) they made sure the contract had a clause stating *that they would not under any circumstances be traded to Springfield.* (Cherry and Fischler 88)

The problem was not that Eddie Shore didn't "know hockey," but rather his eccentric approach to the game:

> At once brilliant and malevolent, Shore was a rare student of the game. Many of his most bizarre seeming theories are now common practice. He believed, for example, in "visualizing." ...[and] also favoured dancing as a training device...During training camp in Hamilton, guests of the Royal Connaught Hotel were startled to find players tap-dancing in the lobby wearing only their pajamas. (Cruise and Griffiths, 180)

Cherry and others tell stories of Eddie Shore's "massages" that sent at least one player (Barclay Plager) to the hospital, and of his verbally abusing officials over the microphone, and in one instance, locking a referee in the dressing room (Cherry and Fischler 91). With the humour only a Springfield survivor could muster, or fully appreciate, Don Cherry observes that "there was something funny about the sight of Shore tying a goalkeeper to the net during a practice session. Eddie did this because he wanted to get the message across...that goaltenders should never fall on the ice" (Cherry and Fischler 90).

These, and other Shore stories, are (incredibly) true, as is the story of an occasion (in the month of January, 1929) when Shore, who was attending a dinner party in Boston, missed the train to Montreal where the Bruins were scheduled to play the following day. Commandeering a car and chauffeur from a wealthy fan/acquaintance Shore decided to drive to Montreal, straight into a blizzard that had grounded all plane flights and blocked most of the roads in the Boston area. Paul

Quarrington's short story in *The Original Six* anthology is a fictionalised version of the journey narrated by the man himself, Eddie Shore:

> I have reasons for needing to be in Montreal. The Bruins' record stands at six wins, seven losses and a pair of ties, miserable by my reckoning, merely mediocre by the league's. A victory or two would alter the whole complexion of the campaign. So that is one reason I must be in Montreal. Also, we are down a spare.... So that is yet another reason why I must be in Montreal.
>
> But the best reason has to do with the storm, which will not stop me.
>
> (Quarrington, in Quarrington 92)

Shore sets out, still in dinner dress (including his famous cape): "I am wearing a suit of the deepest black, complemented by this long cape. It would prove unsatisfactory protection against the winter, to an ordinary man. But where I come from, coldness, frigidity, is King Stork" (88).

That Shore is no ordinary man becomes apparent as he "battles the elements" as if he were, himself, an elemental. His problems are "caused by machines"(91) planes that won't fly and cars that will barely run. He opines (in an archaic speaking style reminiscent of the "real" Eddie Shore's) that skating "is best how to navigate about the globe, your legs spread so as to take in some of its roundness, the centre of your being closer to the core of the planet" (90). On the nightlong drive to Montreal (Shore is a creature of darkness, as well as snow and cold) he is accompanied by the terrified chauffeur who soon turns over the wheel to Shore and retreats to the rear seat. When the chauffeur suggests that they turn back, Shore replies that he has "made a decision to get to Montreal" (96). During the course of the drive, his unreliable steed skids off the road and into the ditch three times, and three times Eddie Shore digs, pushes, or pulls himself out.

As their destination approaches, Shore reflects that:

> When feeling returns to my body I shall be wracked with pain.... and I hope...that I am upon the ice at that time, because I will dominate and destroy. My communion with the storm has strengthened my spirit, even if it has weakened the flesh. (109)

They finally reach Montreal where Shore and the Bruins defeat the Montreal Maroons 1-0 (Shore has had a premonition of this earlier) and, as Quarrington tells us in an editorial note, Boston General Manager Art Ross expressed his gratitude by fining Eddie Shore "$500 for missing the train"(111).

If one were to select the hockey player most likely to "return from the dead" it would surely be Eddie Shore, and in *Power Play* he obliges us. In episode four, after much rationalising, protagonist Brett Parker finally decides to leave Hamilton, his daughter, and his position as general manager of the Steelheads hockey team, to start a new player agency in New York. He walks out of the arena during the second period of an important play-off game. As he is driving to the airport, still listening to the game on the radio, the reception fades out, and the local game is replaced by the faint and static-y play-by-play of a game between Montreal and Boston. Baffled, Parker twiddles with the dial when suddenly he sees a man standing in the middle of the road. Swerving to avoid him, Parker ditches the car, and indignantly confronts the wayward pedestrian. During their exchange, the stranger's identity is revealed. He is the shade of the late Eddie Shore[16], who tells the story of his famous drive from Boston to

Montreal; of how he "drove with eyes frozen shut and hands frozen to the steering wheel." When Parker asks why he would do such a reckless thing, Shore replies: "There are places of significance and import. There are places where you just got to be -- places where you're needed." Even Brett Parker knows better than to give Eddie Shore any backchat. He turns his car around and drives back home to the place where he, too, "is needed."

* * * *

As the Eddie Shore/"Ace" Bailey episode reminds us, hockey can be a physically violent sport. Hockey violence existed in the early years of the game and, despite rules against fighting, if anything it has escalated in the time since then. While I agree with feminist thinking regarding the link between patriarchal cultures and institutionalised violence, I think it would be a mistake to argue that hockey violence is simply an expression of the players' "maleness." John Fiske contends that much popular culture "is violent" (UPC 134) and adds that "violence is popular because it is a concrete representation of social domination and subordination, and therefore…represents resistance to that subordination"(136). Despite the fact that people do get hurt, there is a ritualised aspect to much hockey violence, partaking of carnival and "the play between the forces of discipline and social control and those of disorder and popular pleasure" (Fiske UPC 81). Having said that, it is my view that no one should be subjected to life-threatening injuries for the sake of "entertainment."

Conclusion:

The heroic, in hockey as elsewhere, is a theme with many variations; Howie Morenz and Wayne Gretzky belong to the ranks of magicians and shapeshifters, while

Maurice Richard embodies energy and passion. As hockey players, all of Morenz, Richard, Gretzky, and their complement, Eddie Shore, were exceptional men (as were Gordie Howe, Bobby Hull, Mario Lemieux, and a small pantheon of others). The unusual extent to which Morenz and Gretzky achieved celebrity meant that each was "a man alone," while Eddie Shore was an isolate of a different and more profound order. All rose from humble origins, and were able to achieve heroic status at least partly as a result of "special gifts." It is worth remembering also, that every professional hockey player is, in a sense, a questing hero, because all are dedicated to winning "the holy grail of hockey," the Stanley Cup.

At the beginning of this chapter we noted that the construction of hero figures is the result of an interplay of synchronic and diachronic forces. This is also the case with hockey heroes. For a brief while, for fans in Edmonton Alberta, Wayne Gretzky functioned as a kind of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods (the metropolitan centres of power; the "Original Six," the "NHL Brass" etc.) and brought the Stanley Cup "back to the pond" (or at least to a region that for generations had raised hockey players almost as a crop, shipping the best ones East). As the Montreal Canadiens dynasty extended its reign, Rocket Richard came to be seen less as a man alone and more as the "first among equals," the principal hero of a heroic company. Richard also belonged, symbolically, not just to hockey fans but also to the *Québécois*, just as the Summit Series heroes were mythologised as belonging to all Canadians.

Also present is the traditional tension between the hero as warrior (e.g. Eddie Shore) and the hero as artist (e.g. Wayne Gretzky). Perhaps only Maurice Richard managed to embody both attributes since, according to Roch Carrier "what Maurice was doing on the ice was to write a poem" (CBC radio, May 29, 2000). Often these differences are reified in fan and media loyalties. (There were always a few who denigrated Wayne Gretzky's style of play, in favour of a one-sided version of "old time hockey.") "The mythic structure of any people is inclusive; it must accommodate all of our conflicting, paradoxical desires" (Cummings 103). We choose the hero that best represents our values; that is most meaningful to us. Controversies as to the relative merits of Howe vs. Richard, Lemieux vs. Gretzky, in newspaper columns, but also around the supper table, are familiar examples. We select and reshape[17] our heroes to suit our needs, whether particularised and diverse, or consensual and collective.

Notes to Chapter V

[1] (Saul 7)

[2] (MacLennan 286)

[3] Miller criticises Joseph Campbell for his "portmanteau approach" and for "relentlessly inflating, desecularizing and apotheosizing the heroic role. (69)

[4] This calls to mind the Eucharist with Morenz as Christ figure.

[5] Singer/songwriter James Keelaghan compares a hockey player who died young with one who did not: "I've started on the slow slide back but he's forever glory bound."

[6] "The last hockey game at the Montreal Forum took place on March 11, 1996. All the living Canadiens captains passed a ceremonial torch from hand-to-hand; the oldest of these, the first torch-bearer, was Maurice "Rocket" Richard" (Quarrington OS 61).

[7] Both the Richard and Trudeau funerals were striking in the extent to which they collapsed the distinction between solemnity and spectacle. Perhaps in response to the television cameras, the congregation took on the added role of audience, at times punctuating eulogies with rounds of applause.

[8] Both Howe and Bobby Hull were labelled "defectors" by Clarence Campbell.

[9] The so-called Original Six weren't original at all. They were simply the only teams that survived the Great Depression. Between 1917 and 1929 the NHL was a ten team league. In 1915 a Vancouver-based team won the Stanley Cup (McFarlane 10-12).

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[10] "For me, by going to Russia, you learned to appreciate what we have as Canadians. People want to talk about socialism and they cut up our country. Well, go over there and you'll realize what a great country we have. You learn to appreciate it. You hear all these minority groups going on all the time--well, I'd like to see them over there. We've go rights and they've got the right to shut up about our country" (Paul Henderson, speaking 17 years after the Summit series, quoted in Morrison 202). Gruneau and Whitson observe that "the manner of 'our' victory in the deciding match in Moscow led to an orgy of self-congratulation about the triumph of 'Canadian virtues' -- individualism, flair, and most of all, character-- over the 'machine-like' Soviet 'system'"(263).

[11] The other two were Peter Mahovlich and Red Berenson (Ludwig 41).

[12] Soviet goalie Vladislav Tretiak received "honourable mention."

[13] For example, by drawing the analogy between Gretzky's wife, Janet Jones, and another American seductress who "stole a king," Wallis Warfield Simpson.

[14] Peter Pocklington also owned Gainer's meat packing plant, the site of an unusually acrimonious labour dispute.

[15] In the eyes of some, commerce will always be inherently ignoble and unromantic. Perhaps this explains why Conrad Black wanted so badly to be knighted. Without divine intervention (or, in this case, the Midas-touch of a reigning monarch) there is simply "no admittance" to that other, higher, domain.

[16] In a later episode of the same series, the ghost of Howie Morenz expresses surprise to Brett Parker: "You seen Shore? He musta been on a day pass outa Hell"....

[17] I feel obliged to mention, at least in passing, some recent literary attempts to deconstruct hockey heroes. *The Good Body* and *Understanding Ken* are both novels about the failure of heroes. The latter, written from the perspective of a hero-worshipping twelve-year-old, looks at a hockey hero (Ken Dryden) from the outside. *The Good Body*, in contrast, provides the "view from within," i.e. the denial and despair of a hockey player who is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Both problematise the notion of masculinity and the male body, and each addresses the reality that sometimes heroes disappoint us, and sometimes they also disappoint themselves.

Chapter VI. Retro-populist Self-Presentations

"When Adam delv'd and Eve span

Who was then a Gentleman?"[1]

"I know in my heart that Dief will be the chief

And a dollar worth a dollar again."[2]

-Bob Bossin

While hero-figures play a large part in cultural identity formation, their very separateness makes them problematic. Like Browning's *Andrea del Sarto* there is a necessary gap between what we reach for (heroic attributes) and what most of us actually grasp. If hockey were only about heroes, or even anti-heroes, it would be much more difficult to appropriate on a mass scale. Historically, popular culture forms and practices have often possessed a subversive edge, characterised by iconoclasm ("no gods and precious few heroes") and a "levelling" (democratic) impulse. This pattern appears in medieval beast fables (in which the wily fox usually manages to humiliate the ostensibly more powerful lion) and later works, most famously those of Rabelais from which Bakhtin derives his notion of *carnival*[3]. By definition, the hero must be "Other," yet we often resent his superiority, and always yearn for ways to close the gap between the exemplary figure and our own flawed selves. We are, at one and the same time, worshipful and critical; the tension between Superman and Everyman persists.

In Chapters I and II, I noted that, within the domain of cultural studies criticism, there has been, and continues to be, a debate over what constitutes elitism. The hegemony of high culture has loosened its grip on academic thinking, while in the world beyond the academy there has been a similar reaction, typified by the resurgence of populist politics and its associated norms and values. While acknowledging that populism is "a notoriously slippery concept," Trevor Harrison attempts, I think successfully, to describe some of these populist values: "a populist movement frequently stresses the worth of the common people …and directs its protests against some group which lies outside the local society" (Harrison 5). He also points out that populist movements are "sources of collective identity" which are often "mobilized around symbols and traditions congruent with the popular culture" (Harrison 5).

My argument thus far has been that hockey functions as precisely this type of symbol and tradition for Canadians in as much as our social memory has constructed it as such. In this chapter I will look at representations of hockey as a form of both popular and *populist* culture through the lens provided by two prominent (in the eyes of some, outrageous) hockey *aficionados*: sports personality Don Cherry, and award-winning author David Adams Richards.

Flâneur or Flannelled Fool?[4]

At first glance, Cherry and Richards do not appear to have much in common. Don Cherry was, by his own admission, a minor league player and mediocre coach who was never as "smart" as his brother (Cherry and Fischler 66). He is also a media celebrity in ways and to a degree that no mere (Canadian) writer -- with the possible exception of Leonard Cohen-- would want, or could hope, to emulate (even as a *Frank* magazine poster boy, see: Appendix 'E'). Richards, on the other hand, is an outstanding novelist whose works of fiction continue to be taken seriously by the Canadian literary establishment. Still, there are some similarities that are relevant to the discussion, especially the ways in which both Richards and Cherry have constructed public personas that assert a notion of the past as a time of power for "the little guy." Richards does so through his autobiographical and non-fiction writing, where he often assumes the role and speaks in the (sometimes angry) voice of a cultural and social outsider. In Cherry's case, his persona is constructed *via* the ubiquitous medium of television [5]. Both are occasionally bombastic and iconoclastic, and both are adamant -- even vehement -- in their assertions that hockey forms the symbolic core of Canadian identity.

Popular culture critics Geoff Pevere and Grieg Dymond situate the carefully crafted television persona of Don Cherry as populist, conservative, and nationalistic. To them, he presents " a uniquely Canadian creation combining the beer-loving hoser charm of the McKenzie Brothers, the right-wing curmudgeon quality of Gordon Sinclair, and the genuine, hundred percent proof hypernationalism of Stompin' Tom" (Pevere and Dymond 84). This assessment is not far from Cherry's own self-declared values, as revealed in his autobiography, *Grapes.* His personal heroes include the British admiral, Lord Horatio Nelson (Cherry and Fischler 1); and much of the first chapter of his autobiography is taken up with an extended metaphor linking war and hockey. As coach it is he who is the admiral, while the players (the 1979 Boston Bruins) are his "troops" (2), the ice is a battlefield (10), and pucks become bullets:

> I died on May 10, 1979; at 11:10 p.m. to be exact.

> Two shots killed me. The first, which left me critically wounded, was fired by Guy Lafleur. The one that wiped me out came from the stick of Yvon Lambert. Had I survived these attacks I have no doubt that I would still be coach of the Boston Bruins today. (Cherry and Fischler 1)

Of course, it is commonplace today to use militaristic language when referring to sports. Hockey "enforcers," as well as those who play with exceptional intensity and abandon, are often referred to as "warriors"; teams regularly "battle along the boards," and so on.[6] Also, it is obviously more glorious to die in a patriotic struggle than to (merely) lose a hockey game. Yet there are echoes of the deaths of Wolfe and Montcalm here, and a touch of "Canadian" quixoticism. One cannot imagine Vince Lombardi -- or any one who believes that "winning isn't the main thing it's the only thing" --describing a loss in such terms. But for Cherry, militaristic rhetoric is not simply about advocating violence for violence's sake, as can be seen in a later reference to Nelson:

> …sometimes my thinking is parallel to Admiral Nelson's. He was his own man and most important to him were his sailors, who worked and battled for him. He called them his band of brothers, and that's what I called my players. (Cherry and Fischler 35)

This is reinforced by another of Cherry's favourite similes: "They just stood their glaring at each other, *like a pair of medieval knights who had nothing but the utmost respect for each other"* (9, emphasis added). Both these quotes reveal that Cherry's intent is to reinforce the heroic/chivalric tradition and idea of adherence to a code, one which exhalts, among other things, the values of loyalty, fraternity and mutual respect (at least between rugged individuals who are their "own men"). To some extent Cherry can be seen as an adherent to the 19th century sports ethos discussed and critiqued in Chapter I. In this, as in much else, he is a kind of "throw-back."

There is another Horatio who also figures in Don Cherry's pantheon of exemplary characters and that is Horatio Alger. Like Alger, Cherry expounds on the value of hard work (Cherry and Fischler 40) and endorses the myth of the self-made man (52). After all, how else could someone who "worked for 20 years as a labourer on construction sites" (52) and who always thought of himself as "a good, honest grinder" (218) end up as a fixture on CBC television's *Hockey Night in Canada*:

> The next thing I knew I was a TV personality! In no time at all I realized I was enjoying a lot of the benefits of coaching without any of the headaches. I was still around hockey people…best of all I was *involved* with the game. The producers not only allowed me, they encouraged me to express my opinions.[7](Cherry and Fischler 217, emphasis in text)

Since that time, "'Coach's Corner' has become a national institution, often enjoying higher ratings than the game itself" (Pevere and Dymond 84) and when Cherry's wife Rose died of cancer in the late 1990s, "Grapes" received messages of sympathy and support from loyal fans "coast to coast."

The following excerpt from a 1998 episode is more or less typical "Coach's Corner." The segment begins with Ron MacLean presenting "Grapes" with a braid of sweetgrass sent to him by "Chief Rob Charlie and the Band at Burns Lake."...Cherry's comment: "Sweetgrass...I like that." Next they discuss the conduct of a young junior hockey player who relinquished a point which he had not earned but which would have given him the scoring title in his particular league. “Grapes” remarks approvingly that “to win without honour is not to win at all." Next, there is a brief discussion about aggressive hockey, and specifically the play of Philadelphia Flyer, Eric Lindros. Predictably enough, “Grapes” defends him. Then, without warning, he launches into a rant about the “Qwee-beck language cops," alleging that some helpless anglophone was victimised for using the phrase “Ten Four." MacLean responds by questioning “Grapes” sources:

MacLean: (rolling his eyes) "How do you know that?"

Cherry: "I know ‘cause somebody faxed me...And listen, here we got all this ‘Nord’ -- ‘Sud’ -- ‘Dordy-Nordy’ -- an’ all that...(shakes his head, pauses, and picks up the sweetgrass) I think I’ll have a little smoke of this right now."

MacLean: (signing off to camera) “Dix Quatre!"...

On another occasion, Ron MacLean again displays a gift from some loyal “Grapes” fans; this time it’s a cardboard replica of a Canadian flag bearing the slogan “Don Cherry is Canada’s Best Citizen." The accompanying bilingual comment --“A little support for monsieur Cerise --although I say he ain’t ‘serious’ ” -- complete with pun, is typical of MacLean, whose function is to “claw back” (Fiske’s term) the conversation to the centre of what constitutes acceptable, mainstream opinion. Very often he deliberately wink-nudges the audience as he counters Cherry’s extremism (his tacit message is “That’s just Don”). Occasionally, he even makes a bitingly witty quip at “Grapes”’ expense.

The above analysis of Cherry 's persona and MacLean's role is supported by a more 'generic' summary of the show provided by University of Guelph professor Richard Knowles:

> Cherry …sits uncomfortably close to MacLean, so that in the three-quarter camera shot typically employed for the show he seems virtually to be sitting, like a ventriloquist's dummy, on his interviewer's lap. Cherry faces the camera, thrusting his finger towards the lens as he lectures the viewer aggressively and outrageously on hockey's "tough guys," on the follies of the League's owners and governors, and on the mistakes of timid or overly repressive referees. MacLean, meanwhile, faces Cherry for the most part, with occasional "out takes" to the camera, inserting ironic jibes and raised eyebrows into the discourse…. In short, MacLean plays the straight man and the normative standard against which Cherry's extravagances are measured and through which their impact is modified and contained. (Knowles 124)

Despite his recognition that " Cherry can be read as a politically positive and particularly effective site of populist…resistance, especially as such resistance relates to questions of class" (126) Knowles concludes that Cherry's message is both "deeply reactionary and culturally regressive" (129):

> Cherry's performance on "Coach's Corner" can also be read, however, as that of a particularly complex colonial dummy, and a virtual object lesson on the dangers of post-colonial counter-hegemonic nationalisms which, however effective in consolidating popular resistance, are often notably insensitive to internal differences based on race and gender, and can be dangerously open to

> appropriation, containment, or co-optation.... there is a dangerous and sentimental element of nostalgia in Cherry's performance -- for his own good old days as the coach of the rough and tough Boston Bruin "Lunch Pail Gang" (mostly good old boys from small-town Canada), for his youth in supposedly not-for-profit hockey the way it should be played (before the Europeans and the corporations took it over), and for the pastoral rural past of small-towns and pick-up trucks that haunted so many naturalistic novels and plays of the nationalistic 1960s and early 1970s. (Knowles 126)

Clearly, not everyone is enamoured with Cherry's brand of populism. In Professor Knowles' view Don Cherry is both a "dummy" (the implicit pun is, I think, obvious) and a hick. Worse still, he is an anachronism and nostalgia, furthermore, is "dangerous." Anecdotal evidence (my own informal conversations with fellow hockey fans) also suggests that support for "Grapes" is far from universal --epithets such as "moron" and "muttonhead" abound (See Appendix) --yet exist it does, and from significant numbers of the *Hockey Night in Canada* audience, despite (or perhaps because of) his penchant for the outrageous. As Pevere and Dymond point out:

> During the Gulf War Cherry went a flag-waving tirade against those "wimps and creeps" who opposed Canada's participation. (If any other sports commentator appropriated the public airwaves to flog his/her political views, it would surely mean instant professional self-immolation. But the massively popular Cherry can get away with it.) (84)

More recently, he indulged in similar outbursts in support of Canada's participation in the post-September eleventh, American-sponsored "War on Terrorism."

No one who has ever watched "Coach's Corner" could fail to notice Don Cherry's wardrobe. Knowles (continuing the "dummy" motif) observes that "Grapes" is "always nattily dressed sporting outlandishly wide and brightly coloured ties beneath a stiffly starched and unfashionably wide collar, above which his round face perches like that of some red and puffy Charlie McCarthy" (124), while Pevere and Dymond tell us that, "sartorial trademarks abound, including three-and-a-half-inch starched white collars, impossibly loud plaid jackets, and a variety of ties featuring either hockey team logos or cartoon characters" (84). Even Cherry himself admits that he is preoccupied with dress:

> I took five suits to the Olympics and six shirts, ten pairs of shorts, two pairs of shoes, six pairs of socks. I brought so much clothing that MacLean said, "What, are you staying for eight weeks?" When I arrive at my destination, I always get everything pressed, that's why I look so sharp....I always tried to look sharp, even when I was in the minors earning $4,200 a year. The kids might have been barefoot, but I looked good. Just kidding. (Pearce L/3)

This degree of dedication calls to mind George Bryan "Beau" Brummell, companion to George IV of England and prototypical Regency dandy, who devoted hours to his toilette (Moer 32-33) and whose "reputed goal...was to turn his person into a social artwork" (Garelick 9).

Cherry embodies (literally) other dandy-like traits as well. At least since Baudelaire, dandyism has been associated with nostalgia (Howells xv) and this too applies to Cherry, who freely acknowledges the "retro" character of his dress: "I consider my style to be that of the men of the 1930s, where men had an elegant style, tight suits, tight collars, lots of jewellery, a clean sharp image" (Pearce L/3). Cherry's further admission that " my style has been called foppish but I like it" (Pearce L/3) seems anomalous coming from the aforementioned "priest of rock 'em sock 'em." However, Cherry often flirts with sexual ambiguity (e.g. planting kisses on both Hayley Wickenheiser *and* Doug Gilmour) a practice that is seen by some as a form of homophobia (Knowles 127) but which is also identified with the *fin de siècle* dandyism of Oscar Wilde et al. (Moer 306-314; Garelick 129):

> I also heard on the radio the other day that I looked like a gay because everything was so clean and all that jewellery.... In L.A. I decided to make fun of hockey in La La Land, so I put on a long earring, sunglasses, a white hat and acted gay. We got a lot of heat about that one. Hey, maybe the woman on the radio was right. (Pearce L/3).

The above is vintage Cherry -- an over-the-top visual and verbal move that could easily offend both gay and straight members of the audience. Yet as Pevere and Dymond have noted somehow he "gets away with it." In this too, he resembles the dandy/ flâneur, emerging "as a figure of excess who seems to have escaped (at least temporarily) social norms" (Shields 78).

Cherry's visibility derives from his status as a celebrity; this is what allows him to (quite literally) "make a spectacle of himself." In studies of pop icons such as Madonna, Jacqueline Onassis, Michael Jackson and even Arnold Schwarzenegger, celebrity has been linked with dandyism: "long before the pop-music star and motion picture idol, the dandy had made an art form of commodifying personality" (Garelick 3).

> The media cult personality is the mass-produced charismatic figure… whose image appears and reappears on television and movie screen. It is a personality that encompasses its own mechanically reproduced versions and eventually seems indistinguishable from them. (Garelick 3)

Cherry's role on Coach's Corner has also been described as "pure performance, verging on Camp" (Knowles 124) and Garelick sees Camp as a modern manifestation of dandyism, since Camp style often blurs gender lines and "blends the extratextual, biographical self with the literary or fictionally constructed hero"(18).

However, despite Don Cherry's (near) fetishistic attention to dress, much of the time the result verges on the ridiculous. His "outfits" assault the eye: blazing colours, outrageous ties, silly hats, and the "impossibly loud plaids" referred to above. This is not the garb of the traditional dandy; in fact Brummell was noted for his preference for subdued colours (Moer 34). Rather it is akin to the "Fools Motley" (Billington 47) and while the tartan materials may evoke the Anglo-Scots protestant cultures of Southern Ontario, the garishness of Cherry's sports jackets more strongly calls to mind Harlequin's diamonds, and the legacy of the *commedia dell'arte.*

Fools and clowns have a long and (dare we say "chequered") history. According to Southworth "Clowns, fools-- comedians of one kind or another--have been a feature of virtually every recorded culture in the history of civilization" (1). Folly has been linked with madness; the so-called "Ships of Fools" (Foucault MC 36, Southworth 50) as well as wisdom, divine innocence, and subversive intent (Billington 17; Southworth 48). While it is difficult to gauge the level of Don Cherry's intentionality, I think that there is a subversive aspect to his sartorial excess. In colourful dress, as in his outrageous "colour commentary" he is an example of the carnivalesque fool, of whom John Southworth has this to say:

> A universal, symbolic expression of the antithesis…between the forces of order and disorder, of structured authority and incipient anarchy…. The fool, though constrained, continually threatens to break free in pushing to its limits whatever freedom he is given. He is the trickster of myth in an historical strait-jacket from which he is forever struggling to escape. (3)

Traditionally, according to Billington " the purpose of the Feast of Fools…was that of inversion -- putting down the mighty from their seats and exhalting the humble and meek"(5). However, sceptics such as Terry Eagleton have pointed out that "because carnival's disruptive moment is licensed by the prevailing order it is finally recuperated into that order. It is a strategy of containment… a safety valve that allows the controlled release of popular pressure " (Eagleton cited in Fiske UPC 100) In contrast, John Fiske's reading is more sensitive to the variables of place and time: "On some occasions, in some contexts, carnival can work to strengthen the social order, but on others, particularly in times of social tension, its effects can be much more disruptive" (Fiske UPC 100).

Eagleton's position is similar to the stance taken by Knowles who argues (*vis-à-vis* Don Cherry) that ""Coach's Corner, kept in its corner… serves the counter-carnivalesque function of *producing* dissent, and marketing it, in order to contain *and* profit from it" (126). The subversive impulse is clearly there, but so is the straitjacket. By dressing as he does, "Grapes" is simultaneously endorsing and subverting the "suit-and-tie guys" --saying "yes" to conservative values, but "no" to their accompanying elitism. But this, too, is consistent with his role as fool, since " ambiguity is the essence of traditional folly. Every time we affix one definite characteristic to it, we must discover its conceptual inadequacy" (Zijderveld 4). It is also consistent with his dandy persona, since the dandy "embodies Irony, Caprice, Impertinence…is outside cause and rule…[and] inverts the hierarchy of reality and appearance" (Howell 116). Finally, both the fool and the dandy are figures of excess; something that Fiske argues characterises much of popular culture:

> Excessiveness is meaning out of control…. Excess is overflowing semiosis, *the excessive sign performs the work of the dominant ideology but then exceeds and overspills it*, leaving excess meaning that escapes ideological control and is free to be used to resist or evade it…. *Norms that are exceeded lose their invisibility, lose their status as natural common sense, and are brought out into the open agenda.* Excess involves elements of the parodic, and parody allows us to mock the conventional, to evade its ideological thrust, to turn its norms back on themselves. (Fiske, UPC 114, emphasis added)

When we think of parody and ambiguity (of "double-talk") we also think of irony. Does this mean, then, that Don Cherry's overdressed and overstated persona can be read as ironic? I think it does, at least if we accept Linda Hutcheon's definition of irony. Hutcheon is quick to point out that irony does not need to be intentional: "ironies exist that are not intended but are most certainly interpreted as such. Similarly there are ironies you might intend…which remain unperceived by others" (Hutcheon 10). For Hutcheon, it is important to recognise that irony is more than a figure or a trope, and to regard irony as merely a case of the surface meaning being replaced by a deeper, truer, meaning is to drastically limit its power (Hutcheon 11). Rather, both semantic values continue to exist in a state of dynamic tension (Hutcheon 12). The result is a Fiskean excess --a surplus of meanings, at least plural, more likely multiple, depending on the nature of the discursive communities whose members interpret the ironic text in a range of potentially --if not actually--contradictory ways (Hutcheon 18).

This goes a long way in helping us to understand why Don Cherry is loved by some members of his audience and hated by others. It also explains why we find it so difficult to assign a single fixed meaning to his performances. In the case of Don Cherry, hyperbolic style operates in a parodic fashion to produce a (potentially) ironic effect. While he ostensibly defends the virtues of white maleness, Cherry's foppery betrays the extent to which, within the realm of cultural politics at least) this particular hegemony is "on the ropes" -- not that this prevents him from playing "rope-a-dope" with Political Correctness. Rather than persuasively promoting nationalism Cherry's clown-like flag costumes verge on the ludicrous. As Fiske has already reminded us, the excessive sign inflates the dominant ideology to the point that it (almost) bursts. And yet, it is as if Cherry somehow senses that, coming from him, a straight-faced argument in favour of Canadian nationalism would not be acceptable, so he "goes over the top" (he's "only fooling"). Arguably, even when we find ourselves dismissing it, the residue, the trace, of his message is still present.

A "Man Who Couldn't Play":

Award winning Canadian author David Adams Richards is another self-declared hockey enthusiast who stands accused, with some justification, of the same negative attributes that Knowles et al. ascribe to Don Cherry. Both Richards and Cherry have been taken to task for their outspokenness, and for their "rednecked" conservative values. The following passage is a case in point:

> Reading this book is what you'd imagine spending an hour and a half in a bar with Don Cherry might be like. Richard's affinity with the Grapester is most obviously evident when the topic is – guess what – hockey: "The most shining public example of our life as Canadians is not found with the National Ballet, but with the more moving, more perfect ballet of Izerman (sic), Gretzky and Lemieux" (92). The sentiment, if not the language, is certainly Cherry's. (Mathews 71)

The above is an excerpt from a review of Richard's *A Lad from Brantford and Other Essays.* Reviewer Lawrence Mathews, who is clearly offended by what he sees as Richards' scorn for "The Finer Things," goes even further in his comparison:

> What evidence will Richards/Cherry present to make his claim [that hockey is better than ballet] credible?...Well, none, of course....And who am I to question his wisdom anyway – Some kind of Swede? There are, unfortunately, many metaphorical Swedes in *A Lad from Brantford*, and Richards goes about thrashing them with a humourless gusto that is both the dominant and least attractive feature of this book. (71)

Just who are these "metaphorical Swedes" that Richards supposedly takes his stick to, and why should anyone care? According to Mathews, they are:

> ...people eager to mock Richards and disparage all that he holds dear...invariably articulate and self-assured, often Americans, nearly always

> university professors. But they're also ignorant and deluded. They usually believe themselves to be motivated by a desire to right wrongs, to change the world for the better. But that doesn't fool Richards for a moment; their deeper, unconscious desire is to hold power over others. And as with the impact of Don Cherry's Swedes on our treasured national sport, so their impact on our lives is entirely negative. (72-73)

Mathew's review is entitled "The Revenge of the Swedes" and he deliberately extends this metaphor to his less-than-laudatory conclusion, in which he observes that it's "too bad that there is no literary equivalent to Cherry's *Rock 'Em Sock 'Em* videos"(74).

A Lad from Brantford does indeed contain a short essay on hockey, which in turn features the comparison between ballet and hockey that privileges the latter. It also includes passages such as the following, which seem calculated to provoke moral outrage from liberal academics and other members of the middle classes:

> A man said to me recently, at a dinner in Toronto, when it was mentioned that I had hunted moose, that he thought it quite appalling. That it might be all right if the "aboriginal nations" hunted and fished -- but that white men should never again be allowed to. Then he smiled at me, with the mocking intent of pleasant men who feel suddenly that they now hold the irreproachable view. (It was the view of the rest of the table [some of whom were eating "fish and meat"]. I was the odd man out). (Richards LB 71)

No wonder Richards is considered too rough-edged to be a cultural critic. The dinner party, viewed through the author's hostile eyes, continues to degenerate:

> These were all men and women preparing to leave Toronto the next morning to travel to an Indian reserve to do some general sightseeing, and to get to know "a way of life." None had been to an Indian reserve before --and what struck me as preposterous was that they looked upon this the way some look upon going to a craft fair. (71)

Richard's anger is class anger; it is the anger of the culturally disenfranchised, the rural, the less educated, the poor -- in short, the same pick-up truck driving "good old boys" that, according to Knowles, Don Cherry speaks on behalf of. The following passage makes this clear:

> Sitting there, I was again reminded that there are great safe targets in our world, some of which aren't animals. In fact, half my friends have become them -- and sometimes their entire lives are trivialized in the process. To know some of the men and women I have had the fortune to know, and then to listen to their lives being explained away *by those who would never want to know them* is something of a balancing act between two worlds. (Richards 72, emphasis added)

A Lad from Brantford definitely has a polemical tone in spots, and some of the content could be classified as reactionary, but dismissing Richards as "just another loudmouth with a soapbox" (Mathews 74) is, I think, unfair. While Mathews admires the novels, the implicit message of this review is that Richards should stick to what he knows, and leave social commentary to the --appropriately credentialled-- Grown-ups. Perhaps, but if Mathews (or anyone else) really wants to understand where Richards is coming from (as opposed to simply labelling him as the literary equivalent of a Don Cherry) the book that must be taken into account is his autobiographical work entitled *Hockey Dreams: Memories of a man who couldn't play.* In this work, Richards reconstructs the lost world of his childhood on the Miramichi, a process which involves the familiar pattern, discussed in Chapter IV, of shifting back and forth between the voice of the narrating adult and those of his childhood friends, neighbours and relatives, including an American cousin from Boston who "had never heard of the Boston Bruins" (HD 45).

Hockey Dreams too has its curmudgeonly moments, as the adult Richards exchanges blows with people who don't understand --or love-- hockey. The following skirmish is typical:

> It was 1984. The Canada Cup was on. The night before, Team Canada had beaten the Russians in overtime to advance to the finals.... I wanted to celebrate. I wanted to talk about how exciting it was. I knew no one in Fredericton except for a couple of English professors. And, as admirable as English professors tend to be, they were a different breed than I.
>
> I went into the common room and poured myself a coffee and sat down --waiting for the arrival of someone to talk to. A young female professor from Newcastle Creek entered the room. She was a nice lady, and had met me once at the president's house. She'd once made the remark that she didn't see how anyone would be able to live without reading Henry James.
>
> As she sat there I glanced at her. *Go on,* I said to myself, *Ask her -- she's from Newcastle Creek...she'd have cut her teeth on hockey.* (HD 12-13, emphasis in text)

Lurking uncomfortably in the alien universe of the academy, Richards thinks that he has found an ally -- a local like himself. But not really "like," as their ensuing conversation reveals:

> Finally I could stand it no longer. Turning to her I ventured, "Did you see the game last night?"
>
> "Pardon?"
>
> "Did you see the hockey game?"
>
> "We don't have a television," she said.
>
> "Oh, what's wrong?" I said, "Is it broken?"....
>
> "We don't approve of television," she said....
>
> I had entered, for the first time, another realm, where a woman from Newcastle Creek who may or may not have grown up on salt cod and moose meat could tell me that she disapproved of television and not be a fundamentalist. Could tell me that I wasn't alive until I read Henry James and believe it. (HD 13-14)

By now, both Richards and the reader are prepared for this conversation to end badly, and it does, when his upwardly mobile and culturally-estranged colleague traitorously announces that she and her husband had been hoping for a Russian victory:

> "No, " I said.
>
> I had the same tone as a man might who had just learned that the Titanic had sunk or Passchendaele had cost us thousands of men for 50 yards of mud.
>
> Hearing my tone, the tone of a person bleeding, maybe she felt as if she had won a moral victory.

> "Well, we both hate Gretzky you see." Her accent now turned slightly British.
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Oh, *he's such a Canadian.*" She smiled. (HD 15 emphasis added)

The preceding passages reveal much of what angers Richards, causing him to lash out at "the powerful interests and self-righteous individuals who patronize, denigrate and exploit people and groups with whom [he] identifies" (Mathews 72) a reaction which, in turn, offends and irritates his critics. For Richards, the smug superiority of the Henry James scholar, once (but clearly no longer) from Newcastle Creek, is a betrayal of both her regional roots and her nationality. (If she had not existed, Richards, for polemical purposes, would have had to invent her!)

Nor is Richards above exploiting his aforementioned ability to perform a balancing act "between two worlds" in order to poke fun at middle-class (and/or gendered) ignorance. He describes how, at a literary festival in Australia, he strikes up a conversation with a (male) Czech writer and the two become embroiled in an argument over which hockey player is the best to have ever played the game. Their companion, a publisher's representative who also happens to be a woman, is soon marginalised:

> "Gretzky or Lemieux -- Gretzky or Lemieux -- bahhhh! What about Jagr?"
>
> "Who?" the young woman from Penguin asked.
>
> "Jagr -- Jagr -- the greatest to ever exist."

> "Great, no doubt," I said. "Definitely a great asset to the Penguins -- but not the greatest who ever lived -- he isn't even the greatest of his era -- he isn't even the greatest for the Penguins."
>
> "Pardon me?" the woman from Penguin said.... She made a stab. "So what do you think of Kundera?" she said to the Czech gentleman after a moment's silence.
>
> "Kundera -- what team does he play for?" the Czech writer asked, and winked my way.
>
> The sales representative from Penguin excused herself and did not come back to the table. (HD 18-19)

But there is more -- much more-- to *Hockey Dreams* than chauvinistic vignettes and denunciations of cultural elitism. Like Carrier's *Our Life with the Rocket* it is a compelling account of a community and culture under stress, and of how hockey stitches together the patchwork of our collective lives while remaining, for most, an elusive dream. As noted in Chapter I, exclusionary practices have long been a part of hockey reality, and much of Richards's narrative is about those who tried -- and failed -- to "make the team":

> ...We were all friends with the Foley boys -- there were seven of them. The oldest of them was Paul.
>
> He was the boy who told me that when bigger boys go into the corner after the puck -- or after the ball if it was road hockey -- always watch and wait patiently just on the outside.

"You're too little," he said. And in a characteristically protective way that other children had with me, he added. "You're also lame. You *can't* use your left arm -- so if you just wait, the puck will dribble out to you and you'll have a chance at a goal."

A *goal*. To score one goal was the height of my ambition.

But looking back, half of us playing, half of us who wanted nothing more than to play in the NHL -- which was always to Maritimers somewhere else -- were going to have at least as much problem as me. Being a Maritimer certainly had a little to do with it.

One of our goalies was a girl.

Another was a huge boy with fresh-pressed pants and the smell of holy water, who believed in Santa Claus until he was thirteen. He carried his books like a girl and was in school plays with my sister. "I am of the thespian family," he would say, because his mother once played Catherine of Aragon.

The brother of my friend who cautioned me about going into the corner was a diabetic -- Stafford Foley.

Stafford wore a Detroit sweater and in his entire life he never got outside Newcastle. He was a fanatical sports fan all his life.

Another boy, Michael, had all the talent in the world but did not own a pair of skates until he was twelve. And then only a broken-up, second-hand pair with the blades chipped that he got from a pile in the Foley's basement. (HD 24-25)

The odds are stacked against this group of strays and misfits, but they cling to their faith in hockey with a kind of desperate optimism. The adult Richards, looking back acknowledges the irrationality of their shared passion:

> …since I am writing this for Paul, who told me to wait on the fringe of the boards (which, like others, I never did) and Stafford who wore his big Detroit sweater three times too large and went blind and had the kindest eyes of any child I have ever remembered. Since I am writing this for Michael, one more time, and for Ginette, who went off to a number of bad evenings and sad marriages, but played in the nets for us because no one else would…. I will still say that in those days the NHL was ours too, even if we were in the Maritimes.
>
> And even if none of us had a hope in blue hell of making it, there was a moment when we all -- even Ginette Malefont -- thought we would. (HD 28)

Perhaps they were able to do this because the very smallness of their locale allowed for the illusion of "deep horizontal comradeship" (7) that Benedict Anderson argues is necessary for imagining community:

> Our houses were a mixed bag. You took what you got. It was a neighbourhood half white collar and half industrial and at least a good part poor.
>
> I grew up beside boys who never had a decent meal and whose mothers were last seen somewhere else. And next door our MP was grooming his sons for law and politics.
>
> Our houses, whether they were large or almost falling down, were our houses as kids. *We noticed differences, that was all.* (HD 28, emphasis added)

Initially, in Richard's childhood world, brotherhood preceded "Other-hood," but sometime in the early nineteen sixties things (or at least Richards' perceptions) began to change. In an event freighted with symbolism, polio survivor Richards, and his diabetic friend, Stafford Foley, learn that they have been cut from the local Peewee All-Star team:

> It was expected by me -- I think --although hope is such a strange commodity in human desire that perhaps I actually believed I was going to make it -- even though I was on defence and couldn't skate backwards, nor forwards. And even though Stafford would have to have his sisters travel with the team, so they could yell out at certain moments, "Don't check him, he'll go into a COMA!" (HD50-51)

It is also, around this time, that young David begins "to help Michael with his rink, along with Stafford and Ginette" (HD 69). Michael, an orphaned teenager, who lived with his grandmother and half- brother Tobias, "the only black boy we knew" (HD 30) would:

> ... always make his own rink, down on the Miramichi River -- make his own nets out of snow, and have his own hockey teams. Yet he never was on a trip, never made an All-Star team, though he was as good or better than any of the [local] All-Stars. (HD 50)

Although *Hockey Dreams* is a memoir/ autobiography, Michael --not the author-- is the character who provides the moral centre of the work, lending credence to Matthews' observation that it is a "gift for characterization" (74) that makes the case for the "small-c conservative values that Richards wants to affirm"(74):

> Michael worked as a rink rat from the time he was twelve. His teeth were gone from the time he was fourteen. He had a James Dean kind of hair cut, without ever having heard of James Dean. Michael was a rebel, simply because of his poverty -- he didn't have to not have a cause.... He grew up to have pulphooks put through his hand while working a boat at the age of seventeen. What need he talk about the angst of being a teenager? (HD 48)

Exiled from even the already marginal "mainstreets" of the Miramichi, Michael is closest to nature because his rink is the river, "our *other* place to play hockey" (HD 69 emphasis in text):

> Fires would be lit near the riverbank, and Michael who considered the rink his would be out every day after school sweeping it clean, the ice clear and blue beneath his boots. (HD 69)

The Miramichi itself becomes a means by which Richards connects the landscape, history, a vision of community, and hockey:

> When we lit a fire to warm ourselves, we were doing something that had been done for generations. When Michael talked about getting fish net for back for the nets he was making, that was exactly how nets [i.e. for hockey] were first made in Nova Scotia [in the mid-nineteenth century]. (HD 71)

He continues the point/counterpoint --

> On this river fires were always lit and kept burning by loved ones for loved ones. And that fire near our rink seemed to be like this. It burned when Michael was there alone shovelling the snow from it, after supper when the air was so splintered and cold that each breath pained,

> It burned near us at night when the wind howled and there were only a few of us left flipping pucks or chunks of snow across a windswept, deserted rink. It was all so primitive I suppose -- hockey, frozen hands, ice in your lungs and the fires burning here and there along the river.
>
> Fires had burned when Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo…and fires burned all along the river when Sevastapol fell in the Crimean War in 1857.
>
> In both those wars boys from the Miramichi had fought. By the time of the Crimean War my great great-uncle was a boy on the river, and his son was the first in my family to play hockey.
>
> To try to *explain* this to my uncle, the father of my cousin from Boston, was a rather difficult feat. To explain hockey as being part of the natural world of my youth, and therefore essential to understanding a love of my country, seemed slightly pretentious. Still does. (HD72-73, emphasis in text)

This "natural" world of youth, the river world, which defies rational explanation, eventually ends, and Richards' childhood friends go their separate ways. Sadly, a number of them die young; Michael first, in a car crash (ironically an "appropriate" James Dean ending), Stafford Foley somewhat later, of diabetes, drug abuse, and (seemingly) quiet despair.

Hockey Dreams begins in the present and on a note of mourning: "Ah but the game is lost boys, the game is lost. To go on about it, at times, is like a farm boy kicking a dead horse to get up out of a puddle " (HD 20). For this reason, I think it is fitting that it also end, as it does, in the present, albeit a present that is somehow haunted by the past. Richards, attending a dinner in Toronto where he is "surrounded by many important people"(HD 237) suddenly remembers his Miramichi hockey days:

> A feeling of loss washed over me.
>
> It was a strange feeling to have at that moment. Men in black tie and women in long dresses seemed to float by. I turned, and there standing three feet away was Gordie Howe.
>
> I am not a man to impose, yet suddenly, for all our sakes ---for Michael and Ginette, for Paul and Stafford and Tobias -- I was blurting out things to him. I was telling him the story of when he telephoned me, so long, long ago. I told him we all played on the rinks on the river.... And he, Gordie Howe, smiled and acknowledged this kindly. He, Gordie Howe spoke to me again, after 35 years, when all my past life seemed a ghost.
>
> He nodded and we shook hands. (HD 238)

Richards is a romantic, but he is not a sentimentalist -- his fictional world is far too dark for that. He writes for, and about, his (dead and living) childhood friends, and the past (like Dr. Manette in Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*) is "recalled to life." The above passage is a case in point. In a curious reversal, with the sudden and surprising appearance of hockey hero Gordie Howe the past (that moments before had "seemed a ghost") is made real, and it is the denizens of the here-and-now who (ghost-like) "seem to float by."

Richards writes about hockey, for its own sake, but also for the sake of another kind of dream:

> We were and are all delusional spirits. The delusion is *this*. That perhaps HOCKEY -- hockey can keep this country together. Hockey can save Canada-- for we see to the bottom of our heart there is no Gretzky without Lemieux. Perhaps we are *that* delusional, and perhaps for one time when we really need it to-- when we really want it to, a delusion can work for us instead of against us. (HD 234-235)

For Richards, hockey and Canada are inseparable. Their connection, while not real, is true.

Problematic Populists

Both Cherry and Richards are Canadian nationalists, at a time when this is not a fashionable stance, although Cherry's nationalism is parodied in ways that Richards' is not. Also, their militaristic rhetoric and organic vision of society make them conservatives in the true sense of the term. Furthermore, both are figures of excess (in Richards' case it is the excess of romanticism) which makes it difficult to assign a stable meaning to their personas. Cherry and Richards also sneer at "political correctness," while occasionally --and contradictorily -- taking gender and ethnicity into account. Richards' friend Ginette is accepted because, unlike other girls, she plays hockey, but also because she is loyal, generous and vulnerable. Don Cherry's wife Rose is idealised to an extent that makes her at once more -- and less -- than a "real" woman. Tobias' blackness, while commented on, does not prevent him from playing with his peers on the frozen river. Don Cherry concedes that a few European players are great[8] but of course, for the purposes of his "over the top" "Coach's Corner" rants, they are "the exception that proves the rule." Also, both Richards and Cherry go to great lengths to demonstrate that they are not "Sensitive New Age Guys" but rather "manly" men.

In the previous chapter, I expressed reservations about what I see as a tendency to reduce the discourses of sports and identity to the "problem" of masculinity and its concomitant negative attributes, e.g. "male" rage, physical brutality, etc. However, despite my reservations, I do think it's important to recognise that a great deal of writing about hockey is shot through with themes and images that can only be described as male-centred. (Recall Bourdieu's insight that the working class body is represented and valorised --negatively or positively-- as a *male* body.) In Chapter I, I explored the notion of the working class body as a locus of disciplinary forces, and Bourdieu also reminds us that sport functions as a means of "ensuring *the complete and continuous containment* of the working population" (SSC 365). The result is that the individual body comes to be seen as "the incarnation of the body politic, and thus class terror produces terror of the [male] body" (Fiske UPC 90).

While Harrison's discussion of populism does not focus on cultural issues [9] he does point out that populism is, among other things, a reaction against those identified as members of a *social and/or cultural* elite. This dovetails neatly with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, and the symbolic disenfranchisement of those who experience its lack. This is the nub of the matter, since Richards and Cherry, whether they know it or not, are primarily implicated in issues having to do with class.[10] Richards' "passionate intensity" and Cherry's foppish buffoonery, because they exceed the bounds of what many find "acceptable," can be read as class markers. "*Excess as hyperbole*...works partly to convey class-based meanings -- lower class tastelessness is excessive, middle-class taste is restrained, or so the dominant discourse would have us believe" (Fiske TC 90-91). But there is an ironic aspect to this as well. Granted, Richards and Cherry counterpoise working class "authenticity" to elitism and "identity politics." Yet both of them --award-winning novelist and sports celebrity, respectively -- in effect reduce class, properly understood as a structural phenomenon/social location (Eagleton 187)[11], to just one of many possible identities.[12]

Richards and Cherry express the kind of ambivalence and inconsistency that is associated with populism in general, and Canadian populism in particular. As Northrop Frye observes " in Western Canadian elections, a protest vote may go Social Credit or NDP without much regard to the difference in political philosophy between these parties." Frye adds that this dialectic in Canadian social thought has" profoundly affected its literature" (549-550). Further to this notion of protest, Harrison cites Hofstader's argument that populism is a form of nativism:

> Nativism is a belief system forged out of the conjunction of nationalism with ethno-cultural, religious, and/or racial prejudice. Nativist attitudes are most likely held by people in social groups that have *the same racial, ethnic, and/or religious characteristics as the dominant class, but not the economic or political power.* Such attitudes emerge most frequently during periods of social political or economic crisis; the latter form of crisis suggesting that nativism may also be linked to a feeling of 'relative deprivation'. (Harrison 7, emphasis added)

Richards and Cherry are identified with, and speak for, those who might be classified as experiencing "relative deprivation." Don Cherry has been interpreted, I think accurately, as giving voice to:

> … the unspoken fears and anxieties of many "ordinary" English-speaking, working class Canadians about such things as political correctness, feminism, "the French," the Metric system and immigration…. Finally, and perhaps nostalgically, Cherry voices popular resistance to, and resentment of, the increasingly corporate character of hockey as it partakes in corporate style "globalization" and the "free trade of hockey players as commodities…. and the 1990s multinationalization of sports as of the business world in general. (Knowles 124-125)

The opinions of cultural critics aside, it may even be the case that his many fans love "Grapes" less for his outrageous opinions than for his demeanour, which is that of an "ordinary guy"[13] who blundered into a television studio and somehow convinced the media mavens to let him stay there. Even the most carefully-crafted images are not immune to naïve appropriations.

Conclusion:

While both can, in different ways, be thought of as "celebrities," Richards and Cherry are peripheral to "Capital H hockey" and the power centre that is the NHL. As mentioned earlier, "Grapes" spent most of his playing career in the minor leagues, while Richards (in his own words) "couldn't play." Neither one came close to being the "golden lads" elegised by Houseman, nor did either possess a "Praxitelean body" that "sculptors would kill for"[14] (Gzowski 13). Even hypermasculinity is called into question, since the dandy can be read as a figure of masculine identity under stress (Adams 215) and "the *flâneur* represented not the triumph of masculine power, but its attentuation" (Wilson 74). However, where hockey is concerned, it is the mythology that counts, and none of the above prevents David Adams Richards and Don Cherry from claiming the game as their own. In the next Chapter, I will look more generally at how Canadian audiences appropriate hockey, insisting that it is still "our" game, despite increasing evidence that, practically speaking, it is not.

Notes to Chapter VI

[1] John Ball, in the text for a sermon to the rebels involved in the Peasants' Revolt, June 13, 1381. Cited in *A Radical Reader: The struggle for Change in England, 1381-1914.* Ed. Christopher Hampton. London: Penguin, 1984, p. 53.

[2] From the song "Dief will Be the Chief Again" by singer/songwriter Bob Bossin, formerly of the folkgroup Stringband. He has this to say about the song: "My connection to (former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker) began in 1974, on the night that Muhammad Ali became the first man to regain the world heavyweight boxing title I watched the fight on TV in Bob Rae's small off-campus Toronto appartment…he mused that Floyd Patterson could now return to beat Ali, Marilyn Bell could re-swim Lake Ontario, and Dief could be the chief again." (www.island.net/~oldfolk/index.htm)

[3] "In his study of Rabelais, Bakhtin (1968) developed his theory of the carnival to account for the differences between the life proposed by the disciplined social order and the repressed pleasures of the subordinate" (Fiske UPC 81).

[4] The term "flannelled fool" derives from a 1950s BBC radio episode of *The Goon Show* entitled "Insurance: the White Man's Burden" and written by the late Spike Milligan. Other origins of the term, if any, are unknown.

[5] Other vehicles include his autobiography, *Grapes,* ghostwritten by sports journalist Stan Fischler (which formed the basis of a two-part television documentary), as well as "Grapelines" a nationally syndicated radio show, and his well-known *Rock 'em, Sock 'em* hockey videos.

[6] In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault observes that "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons"(228). In a parallel sense, the rhetoric of war has been adopted by sport, whose rhetoric in turn has been adopted by business ("team players" etc.). This too has a circularity which echoes Foucault, as warfare seems to be an increasingly bureaucratic, euphemistic, and "managed" affair, and the CIA has been "The Company" for a while now….

[7] In contrast to various general managers, team owners and NHL "brass" Cherry had clashed with during his years as a coach (Cherry and Fischler 3,60-61, 197).

[8] For example, Peter Forsberg and Mats Sundin.

[9] Harrison's primary concern is with politics -- specifically the politics of the then-Reform/now-Alliance Party.

[10] An aspect is often overlooked or dismissed by critics who are focussing on what Knowles terms their "gyno/xeno/homophobia."

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[11] Eagleton's comment is certainly worthy of inclusion in a note: "The idea of social classes as 'subjects', central to Lukacs's work, has also been contested. *A class is not just some kind of collectivized individual, equipped with the sorts of attributes ascribed by humanist thought to the individual person: consciousness, unity, autonomy, self-determination and so on.* (emphasis mine) Classes are certainly for Marxism historical *agents* (emphasis in text) ; but they are structural, material formations as well as 'intersubjective' entities and the problem is how to think these two aspects of them together" (Eagleton 187).

[12] This can be read as an ongoing paradox/contradiction in populist politics. Recall that during election campaigns in the 1990s, Ralph Klein and Preston Manning, wearing denim shirts and blue jeans, appeared on billboards and television, reminding us that the wealthy and powerful can, when it serves their purposes, wrap themselves in the image of the "common man."

[13] The song "Gordie and My Old Man" by Canadian pop group the Grievous Angels fades out with the following barely audible comment: "Don Cherry -- he's such a goof! He's just like my uncle...."

[14] In reference to former Edmonton Oiler Mark Messier.

Chapter VII.

Simulacrowds, Cyberfans and Ranters

"One thing I know for sure about being a fan is this: it is not a vicarious pleasure despite all appearances to the contrary.... Watching **becomes** *doing."*
-Nick Hornby[1]

"The cup stays here!"[2]

As stated in the Introduction, audience research is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, I recognise that to talk about mass/popular culture without some discussion of the audience -- be they readers, viewers, or listeners, -- would neither be adequate from a scholarly point of view, nor would it do justice to the richness of the topic. With the acceptance of reception/ reader response theory in literary criticism (Fish; Iser; Jauss et al.), and advent of audience research within the fields of media and cultural studies (Morley; Ang; Jenkins) came the recognition that meanings do not reside exclusively, or even primarily, within the text. Rather, they are negotiated between the text in question and a community of socially situated readers. The extent of this "negotiation" and the nature of the process itself, have long been sources of contention. In Chapter I, mention was made of Stuart Hall's attempt to reconcile two opposing positions on the nature of audience participation in mass/popular culture. The first, (passive manipulation) is identified with the Frankfurt School (especially

Theodore Adorno) the second (creative appropriation) with John Fiske, Michel de Certeau et al.

One of the attractions of Hall's encoding/decoding model, as a framework for theorising about culture, is the fact that it emphasises the need to investigate *both* the ways that cultural texts are constructed, and the ways that they are interpreted by real audiences. The other is that it resists the stasis that inevitably results from exclusively embracing either one of the two polar positions. Fan identities, too, are sites of contestation, constructed as they are on what Henry Jenkins terms "the 'borderlands' between mass culture and everyday life" (Jenkins 3). Mica Nava sums up the ways in which "consumerism" is a complex process:

> Consumerism is far more than just economic activity; it is also about dream and consolation, communication and confrontation, image and identity…Consumerism is a discourse through which *disciplinary power is both exercised and contested.* (Nava, cited in Storey CCEL 170)

In recognition of the above, this final chapter will focus on how various "stakeholders" (advertisers, the media, the NHL et al.) who largely control the terrain upon which the "business of hockey" takes place, attempt to produce and market fan identities. I will also comment on some of the ways that, even as they are offered increasingly slick prefabricated images to emulate, and roles to step into, members of the hockey audience still find ways to actively construct "counter-identities," using mass media culture as a resource (Jenkins 1). As Fiske points out, while "the 'raw material' of fan culture is the commercial commodities (texts, stars, performances) of the culture industries …there is a constant struggle between fans and the industry, in which the industry attempts to 'incorporate' the tastes of the fans, and the fans to 'excorporate' the products of the industry" (Fiske CCF 46-47). However, before focussing on this struggle, I need to make a brief detour to discuss that dismissable entity known as "the fan."

In *The Divine Ryans,* when Draper Doyle is accused, by his sister Mary, of being a hockey "fanatic," he asks Uncle Reginald what the word means. His uncle tells him that a fanatic is "a fan who's so crazy he has to be kept in the attic"(73). Reg Ryan, it turns out is not so far off the mark:

> The literature of fandom is haunted by images of deviance. The fan is consistently characterized (referencing the terms origins) as a potential fanatic. This means that fandom is seen as excessive, bordering on deranged, behaviour…[involving] images of social and psychological pathology. (Jenson 9)

Jenson identifies two general categories of "fan types -- the obsessed individual and the hysterical crowd" (9) which she feels predominate. If Draper Doyle is an example of the former, the following passage from Morley Callaghan's novel *The Loved and the Lost* is indicative of "the frenzied or hysterical" (Jenson 11) crowd. The setting is a hockey game in the Montreal Forum, and the triggering event a bad call against the home team, which (predictably) drives the crowd wild:

> The ice was now a small white space at the bottom of a great black pit where sacrificial figures writhed, and on the vast slopes of the pit a maniacal white-faced mob shrieked at the one with the innocent air who had broken the rules and the one who tolerated the offence. It was a yapping, frenzied roaring. Short and

> choppy above the sounds of horns, whistles, and bells…the stout French Canadian…reached down and tore off his rubbers and hurled them at the ice. A shower of rubber came from all sections of the arena and littered the ice as the players ducked and backed away. Hats sailed in wide arcs above the ice and floated down.
>
> "They've all gone crazy, McAlpine muttered to Catherine. "Just a crazy howling mob." (Callaghan 165-166)[3]

An equally unflattering portrait (this time of perennially disappointed New York Rangers fans) is provided by Jeff Klein in "Now I Can Die In Peace":

> …. Eighteen thousand throats, screaming as one at the Ranger's foes, urging them to die behind the wheel of a sports car, reminding them that they were involved in a statutory rape scandal, ridiculing them because their ex-wives had accused them of spousal abuse in a divorce case, telling them over and over again that they *suck,* all roaring the earsplitting roar of frustration and dread and hate. (Klein in Quarrington 151-152)

We have seen these fans before -- recall the Richard Riots discussed in Chapter V -- and indeed they are as old as Dionyssius, who was torn apart by his passionate followers. But why has this representation been the predominant one? Jenson contends that the tendency to view fans as "abnormal 'others' irrationally obsessed with particular figures or cultural forms, capable of violent or destructive behaviour" (23)…"involves issues of status and class, as they inform vernacular cultural and social theory" (21). She draws a parallel between "fandom" and her own preferences for William Morris, William James, and John Dewey:

> Would I defend my 'team,' the pragmatists, against the attacks on them by, say, Hegelians, neo-Marxists and/ or post-structuralists? You bet. Would I do so in a rowdy, rambunctious or violent way? Of course not. I would respond instead with respectable rowdiness (acerbic asides in scholarly articles) and acceptable violence (the controlled, intellectual aggression often witnessed in conference presentations).
>
> Would I claim to be 'in love' with any of these individuals, would I offer to die for any of these preferences? Not likely, and certainly not in public. I would lose the respect of my peers. Instead, I will say that I 'admire' William James…I 'enjoy' pre-Raphaelite design and 'am drawn to' aspects of pragmatism…. But, as I hope my confessions have made obvious, my aficionado-hood is really disguised, and thereby legitimated, fandom. (22-23)

There is a touch of tongue-in-cheek in this critique of elitism, but only a touch. As Jenson et al. have noted, the tendency, prevalent until recently, to see fans as deviant "Others," encourages us to dismiss fandom, instead of (sympathetically) attempting to understand it.[4] Furthermore, as writer and life-long soccer fan Nick Hornby explains, it is also an oversimplified portrayal of a population that is far from homogeneous:

> It is true that that most football fans do not have an Oxbridge degree (football fans are people, whatever the media would have us believe, and most people do not have an Oxbridge degree either); but then, most football fans do not have a criminal record, or carry knives, or urinate in pockets, or get up to any of the things that they are supposed to. (96)

Hornby adds that "casting football supporters as belching sub-humanity makes it easier for us to be treated as such, and therefore easier for tragedies like Hillsborough[5] to occur" (97).

Increasingly, cultural studies is questioning the stereotypical view that fans are "easily manipulated and distracted" (Grossberg AFS 51) and that "various forms of popular culture appeal to the audience's most debased needs and desires, making them even more passive, more ignorant and non-critical than they apparently already are" (Grossberg AFS 61). Rather, it would appear that Jenkins is correct when he observes that "fan culture is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon, inviting many forms of participation and levels of engagement" (Jenkins 2). My own experience as a hockey fan confirms Oriard's observation that "sport is both publicly witnessed and widely discussed among fans across the spectrums of gender, race, class, region, profession, and religion" (4). Different audiences read cultural texts differently (which does not, of course, mean that they read them arbitrarily).

Fan Identities and Television:

The most significant television program for Canadian hockey fans is unquestionably *Hockey Night in Canada.* Its beginnings were in radio: "Radio coverage of hockey games in Canada first began when CFCA, a station created for publicity purposes by the Toronto *Star,* began to broadcast local amateur games in 1923" (Gruneau and Whitson 100). By 1933 "NHL hockey became one of the first radio programs to address a national Canadian audience" (Gruneau and Whitson 100). Later that year CKAC in Montreal began broadcasting games in French and "this set the stage for truly national hockey broadcasts" and by the end of the 30s "the audience for *Hockey Night in Canada* had nearly doubled to two million listeners" (Gruneau & Whitson 100-101). Gruneau and Whitson are emphatic in their assessment of the program's impact:

> Never had so many Canadians in all corners of the country regularly engaged in the same cultural experience at the same time. Stories and characters from NHL games emerged as the stuff of Canadian folklore: Red Horner "knocking people into the cheap seats," Eddie Shore's injury of Ace Bailey, the tragic death of Howie Morenz. *Hockey Night in Canada* began to create for hockey, and in particular NHL hockey, a deeply rooted, almost iconic place in Canadian culture, regardless of the fact that the NHL had become a continental league dominated by U.S. money. (101)

This view is endorsed by Bruce Kidd who stresses that "from its inception *Hockey Night in Canada* was one of the most successful programs in Canadian history"(SCS 259). He adds that:

> Millions tuned into (sic) it avidly at some point in their lives, and during the spring Stanley Cup playoffs it brought many other social activities to a halt. During the bleak days of the Depression and the Second World War, it gave many people their strongest sense of pan-Canadian identity…'It helped the anonymous individual feel more like a person and the mass more like a community'. (SCS 259)

In the 1950s television coverage of *Hockey Night in Canada* supplanted the old radio broadcasts and the program was further institutionalised as an inter and transgenerational cultural event.

Hockey "on the air" however, was not the same as hockey on the pond, and the television screen, as we well know today, is far from a window on reality. In *Television, Technology and Cultural Form,* Raymond Williams discusses television in terms of "flow." Williams argues that rather than being looked upon as a kind of anthology of discrete and self-contained units, television should be regarded as a continuous whole. This suggests that the contiguity of programs with one another, as well as the insertion of carefully crafted advertising, points to a kind of intertextuality which blurs the ostensible boundaries of TV programming. Margaret Morse employs Williams' theory in her analysis of American professional football as a televisual event. She points out that even such things as the hour of the day, or the time-slot in the viewing week in which a specific program is broadcast, should be taken into account. The weekend viewing of American football, she notes, "is clearly targeted at a primarily male audience at leisure from the work week" (60) and, like most sports, occupies a "privileged position in comparison with other television genres which must fit the procrustean beds of half-hour and hour times slots" (60).

Williams' notion of flow provides a useful vantage point from which to view *Hockey Night in Canada* as a television "text." Morse's research is helpful as well, since it is clear that this particular program enjoys many of the same advantages as American football when it comes to scheduling. *Hockey Night in Canada* airs on Saturday nights, and, since the advent of back-to-back games, it "occupies" (in the sense of taking over a territory) CBC TV from five p.m. to approximately eleven p.m. (the end time is approximate because the lengths of games vary, depending on such unpredictable factors as the number of stoppages of play, etc.). This means that even a highly valued program like *The National* must adjust its schedule to fit into the "residual" space left by the hockey game(s). As far as the audience is concerned, for those who put in a standard forty-hour work week, Saturday nights are the peak recreation/leisure/pleasure point of the weekend. (Friday night you are still "burned out" from working that day as well as the four previous; Sunday night you are preparing --practically and psychologically-- to return to work Monday morning). Morse contends, with some justification, that there is gender bias here, since " even for working women, weekends do not necessarily mean leisure"(60) (although as someone who for years was both a worker and a housewife, my own perception was that the weekend, despite the ongoing domestic chores, actually did constitute "free time" in a way that weekdays did not). The Saturday night time-slot also has implications re. probable age and marital status of the audience, since teenagers and young adults tend to a) be single, and b) go out on Saturday nights. The current popularity of sports bars suggests that these social activities are not incompatible with watching televised hockey games, but the viewing context will certainly not be a domestic one.

As mentioned, analysing television sport in terms of "flow" also means analysing, not just the discrete televised event (i.e. the game), but also everything that frames and shapes it. In the case of *Hockey Night in Canada* this involves not only advertising, but also an entire army of broadcast professionals: announcers, commentators, producers, and technicians, all of whom contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the product that is beamed into our living rooms each weekend. I propose to look first at the broad outlines of how the program is structured, then look more closely at selected portions that I consider to be particularly significant.

Hockey Night in Canada has its own readily identifiable theme music and introductory visuals. In all the years that I have been a viewer, this theme music has changed only once, and this, along with the fact that the program is a carry-over from radio, works to create an impression of continuity, stability, tradition, comfort, familiarity and obviously, for some, nostalgia. The visuals, in contrast, have kept up with the times, and display many of the same characteristics that Morse has noted re. American "pro" football:

> Examples of the high stylization typical of the football medium event may be seen in the opening graphics, consisting of animated neon forms in saturated colours, choreographed in typical play postures.... These colorful graphics and moving frames exert a visual fascination. (50)

The message these graphics send is clear and contemporary. While we recognise that the game of hockey has a long and honourable tradition as an amateur sporting event here in Canada, as a television production, there is nothing amateurish about *Hockey Night in Canada.* In fact it is "state of the art."

Lest the frenetic glitziness of the intro prove overly disturbing to the (supposedly) staid CBC audience, we are immediately introduced to the reassuring -- and prototypically "Canadian"--figure of Ron MacLean, *Hockey Night in Canada*'s host, and our guide through the rest of the viewing experience. MacLean (who is to American sports figures like Howard Cossell as matter is to anti-matter) is cheerful, articulate and polite; an "ordinary guy," but maybe just a bit brighter. While MacLean's obvious intelligence shines through, it is never threatening, as it is carefully (and one suspects, deliberately) downplayed by his slightly deferential manner and relaxed, low-key, and sometimes self-deprecating humour. MacLean's persona seems tailor-made to inspire trust in the audience, and his positioning as host serves to underline and intensify our confidence in him. It is MacLean who provides transition and continuity within the framework of the program, weaving together the various elements. He is the one who greets us at the beginning and says goodnight to us at the end.

Each of the game segments of *Hockey Night in Canada* 's "doubleheader Saturday" includes three periods of televised hockey, plus two intermissions, and numerous commercial breaks. At various points throughout the program we are provided with other kinds of information ranging from statistical updates, highlights from other games, interviews (usually of players, but sometimes of coaches, general managers, owners, NHL commissioner, Gary Bettman, etc.), analysis and commentary by "experts," journalists and hockey personalities, the play of the week, scouting reports -- the list goes on and on. While all of the above can, and indeed should, be considered integral parts of the program, for the purpose of this chapter I will focus on three: the coverage of the game proper, intermission "infotainment," and advertising[6].

First, the re/presentation of the game itself. In "real" hockey, the number of shots on goal far exceeds the number of goals scored, yet it is the latter that the television format focusses on. Commenting on British soccer coverage, Fiske and Hartley emphasise that in television sports "...the sign of achievement is a goal" (143) and add, "the full meaning of the word should not be missed"(143). Their contention is supported by Margaret Morse, who notes that, in American football, the focus on the actions and achievement of the individual player transforms "the visual and aural material of the game itself"(48). Television technology allows for the suspension of time and fragmentation of space through such things as the instant replay (often in slow motion) and the shifting back and forth of camera angles and distances:

> the end effect of these distortions is to emphasize only points of action and body contact, to the detriment of the "over all geometry of the game." The ball carrier is separated from his context within the team effort and much information about each play is lost. (Morse 48)

The same is true of televised hockey. Camera angles vary, the "default" shot is an overview which covers about one-third of the ice-surface at any given time, and which tracks the play from end to end. As the play shifts, so does the camera. Ice-level shots from the corner occasionally give us a glimpse of along-the-boards defensive plays (i.e. those involving body contact), but usually the camera follows the puck carrier, disregarding strategic defensive manoeuvres, and what Morse aptly describes as "the over all geometry of the game"(48). Cameras are also located in, behind, and above the net, as well as above centre ice. The former, the net cameras come to life when a goal is scored, particularly if the goal is at all controversial. In real hockey, scoring a goal is a highly compressed event, a matter of a fraction of a second, but it is the culmination of a sequence of plays that may have started at the opposite end of the rink, or as a result of the last face-off. On television, however, this split second totally eclipses the events leading up to it, as it is viewed and reviewed from a variety of angles, and with "informed commentary" by the play-by-play and colour men.

Hockey Night In Canada's senior play-by-play man is Bob Cole, and his partner is colour commentator and former coach, Harry Neale. We catch glimpses of them only briefly, usually before the game starts. When the game is going on, they are invisible, yet present as disembodied voices. This is also true of American football coverage and, according to Margaret Morse, has the effect of imaginatively "relocating" the TV viewer at the actual event:

> The voices would seem to emanate as part of a phantom crowd somewhere *close behind* and to the sides of the television viewer. It is as if the viewer were an eavesdropper on two magnificently informed experts and fellow fans, just outside his field of view. (53)

Like Sgt. Joe Friday, famously of *Dragnet*, the play-by-play man presents "just the facts," however the role performed by the colour man is an explicitly hermeneutic one. He is a member of the priestly caste of commentators who interpret the events on the ice for us, providing us with ready-made insights from those "in the know." Fiske and Hartley observe that, in sports television, colour commentary combines with instant replay in ways that allow us to participate vicariously in the role of expert (144) even though, in reality, we are "sidelined" in our living rooms. Since we also tend to identify with the achievements of individual players, this particular structure provides us with the opportunity to be both performer and critic.

For Fiske and Hartley, sport is "ritualized conflict" (145), which expresses the values of competitive capitalism. This, in part, accounts for television's tendency to focus on the individualistic and aggressive aspects of a particular sport and on winners rather than losers. Fighting in hockey is a good example. When an altercation breaks out between two or more players the camera zooms in to half-body shots of the antagonists, flailing wildly at each other, while the officials, and/or their team-mates, attempt to separate them. Afterwards, it is not unusual for the colour commentator to declare, only half-facetiously, one of the participants to be the victor! Interestingly enough, unlike goals, fights are rarely the subject of replays or retrospective glances of any sort, yet there are exceptions, as in a dispute a few years ago between Colorado Avalanche goalie, Patrick Roy and Detroit netminder, Chris Osgood. This particular conflict is noteworthy for at least two reasons: First, goalies traditionally do not fight. (When one considers the extent to which they are encumbered by protective equipment, this is not surprising). Second, this particular fight, clearly instigated by Roy, was a "rematch" of a fight a year earlier, between Roy and then Detroit goalie, Mike Vernon. Vernon won that particular fight, and later on, during the play-offs, his team, the Red Wings, eliminated Colorado and went on to capture the Stanley Cup. This adds another dimension to the ritualistic aspect of fighting in hockey. More to the point, the Roy/Osgood square-off occurred earlier in the week, so it was (obviously) not part of the play of the game in which it was shown, but was included as intermission material...a bit of extra "entertainment." That this would occur is indicative of what has traditionally been the difference between sport and television sport (to paraphrase Fiske and Hartley).

In live hockey, intermissions are the point at which spectators "stretch their legs," and go for drinks, or snacks, or leave the arena for a smoke. It is also the time when they launch into animated discussions about the highlights of the game thus far, the quality of the officiating, the success or failure of a particular coaching strategy, etc. Almost universally, this is an intersubjective, dialogical process; collectively, fellow-fans hammer out an interpretation of what has just happened on the ice.

Arguments may break out, and consensus is not always achieved. But, in the case of television intermissions, much of this work is done for us. “The Satellite Hot Stove” features host Ron MacLean quizzing a panel of experts, who are usually sports journalists, retired players, or in some cases (e.g. John Davidson) both. While they may discuss aspects of the game that is currently in progress, they usually spend most of their allotted time “talking shop” at a more general level, exchanging celebrity gossip and inside information on such things as trade rumours, proposed rule changes, and so on. In a vicarious sense, the television viewer does gain membership in this select group, but the partnership is a silent one. We are free to accept or reject their opinions, but we do not take a vocal part in shaping the discourse. (This may in part explain the popularity of phone-in radio shows such as the local forum, “Sports Talk." Audience members may want to take a more active role, particularly if they have dissenting opinions. Ironically, these opinions themselves will be validated by the sheer fact of having been aired via the media). While some of *Hockey Night in Canada*’s intermission material varies from game to game, depending on what is topical (e.g. the participation of NHL players in last Olympics), “The Satellite Hot Stove” is a regular feature. So too, is “Coach’s Corner."

The third, and final element of *Hockey Night In Canada* to be looked at is the advertising. The official sponsor of the program is Labatt’s Brewery, and beer ads, for their own products, as well as Budweiser and Molson’s Canadian, are a regular part of the show. Such advertisements invariably feature healthy active young people (women as well as men) usually in an outdoor setting and often involved in some form of sport or recreational activity. (Presumably, while middle-aged "couch potatoes" may buy beer, they do not sell it!) It was interesting to actually note the different kinds of ads that occurred during a single game, and to discover that the range of products advertised was much greater than I had expected. There was, of course, beer, as well as cars, especially --though not exclusively-- trucks and recreational vehicles. There were also several fast-food restaurant ads (A&W, Mcdonald's, Wendy's, and Tim Horton's). Other products include men's deodorant, athletic equipment, running shoes, gasoline (Esso and Petrocan) cellular telephones, Canada Post, airline companies, insurance companies, London Drugs, Canadian Tire, and Bumper to Bumper Automotives. However, a surprising number of ads were devoted to various kinds of herbicides, and there was even an ad for Olds Agricultural College. This suggests that the advertisers assume that a significant proportion of viewers of *Hockey Night in Canada* are involved in some kind of farming activity. It also suggests that ads vary from region to region, since I doubt that the Olds College ad aired nationally -- nor, in all likelihood, did the herbicide ads). Although according to Gruneau and Whitson, the *Hockey Night in Canada* audience is predominantly made up of men, in terms of the range of products represented, these ads were targeting more than just young male sports fans. (All this suggests, among other things, that *Hockey Night in Canada* is perceived by advertisers as being both a nation-wide and a family show.)

What was more obvious was that advertisers also exploit the ways in which certain attitudes and values have been (rightly or wrongly) identified with certain regional "cultures." The following example of an ad for Lethbridge Pilsener beer is a case in point. Although it is no longer an independent local brewery, "Pil" is regarded by many as the quintessential Alberta beer. This particular ad depicts a group of burly young men in plaid shirts who are attempting to enjoy themselves in the great outdoors. Unfortunately, they are thwarted at every turn by green and white government signs which read “no stopping," “no hiking” etc. etc. In their effort to escape the vile constraints of bureaucratic regulation, they press on ever deeper into the wilderness, but to no avail. The signs are everywhere. Finally, they come to a halt, and reaffirm their threatened individual freedom by defiantly cracking open bottles of “Pil". (The ad ends here, so we do not see them shooting holes in the offending signs, but it seems likely that, after a few more “brewskis,” this would be the next logical step.) Obviously the advertiser (ironically, an eastern company, Molson’s) is appealing to the neo-conservative reflexes of the stereotypical “Alberta Redneck” -- and in doing so, presenting images that reinforce that same stereotype.

Another interesting example is the (kinder, gentler) dual-purpose ad produced by Esso in their capacity as corporate sponsor for the Canadian Women’s Hockey Team. It begins with a little girl’s voice saying “This time, *I’ll* be Wickenheiser...and you be Botterill....” (Hayley Wickenheiser, relative of former NHL player, Doug Wickenheiser, and Jennifer Botterill, daughter of a well-known sports psychologist, are two of the better known members of the Canadian women’s team -- hence “name recognition.") Next, we see a misty, slow motion sequence of the women’s team in action, with a voiceover of the same little girl doing the play-by-play. The sequence culminates in a goal by Hayley Wickenheiser and the camera abruptly cuts to a driveway in the suburbs where two little girls are playing road-hockey. It turns out that everything that has gone before was a fantasy. It is the little girl who was “pretending” to be Wickenheiser who has actually scored, and the shot ends with her jumping up and down, triumphantly waving her stick in the air. The last thing the viewer sees is the name "Esso" as a quietly authoritative male voice informs us that the company is "a proud sponsor" of the women's team. The explicit message here is about gender-parity in hockey and the importance of role models. The other, more implicit message is: "Esso is a good corporate citizen --and, in turn, deserves *your* support. Looked at in terms of its structure, the Esso ad is a montage involving two back-to-back shots which underline the fact that fantasy and reality are occurring in the same timeframe. It is essentially a spatial, more than a temporal arrangement of "content." (The Molson's ad, however, is clearly a narrative. Our "heroes" wander through the woods, and are confronted by obstacles, which they overcome, at least symbolically, at their journey's end.)

In both the above examples, advertisements are playing with notions of identity in ways that deliberately attempt to involve the viewer and inspire "brand loyalty." Media theorist Robert Allen draws upon literary reception and reader-response theory to explain how this might work:

> we might regard the implied fictional reader as a textual place or site...It is the position the text asks us to occupy...In other words, every fiction offers not only a structure of characters events and settings, but a structure of attitudes, norms and values as well. (Allen 89)

For the implied or characterised fictional reader, Allen substitutes the "characterised viewer," and the text in question is, of course, television. Allen's ideas follow the notion of subject-construction present in the works of Michel Foucault who extends the concept from individual texts to entire discourses. As was noted in Chapter I, these ideas have also influenced British Cultural Studies, in part through Stuart Hall's appropriation of hegemony theory and rearticulation of the Althusserian notion of "interpellation." Particular ideas, practices and rituals, both discursive and non-discursive, call upon us to assume certain identities. Doyle McCarthy provides some examples:

> ...one's material existence might be manifest at one man's biweekly A.A. meeting at the church hall, at one woman's meeting of a lesbian reading group, or at a child's weekly Little League baseball game or Scout meeting. In each of these places ideologies are at work, producing forms of subjectivity, identifying who we are...making my me-ness obvious and true: "*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete individuals....*". (Althusser 172, quoted in McCarthy 41-42, emphasis in text.)

While Allen does not speak explicitly of ideologies, he does talk about what he terms "the rhetorical mode" of television programming which includes, among other things, TV sports and many commercials. These programs directly encourage viewer identification, inviting him/her to enter "what Robert Stam has called... 'the regime of the fictive We'" (Stam, quoted in Allen 93). Allen gives the example of the telethon:

> The host usually stands in front of a raised bank of tables, behind which staff members or volunteers sit answering telephones...Each ringing telephone is (in semiotic terminology) an indexical sign for a characterized viewer -- a reminder to the audience of how they "should" act.... the phone-a-thon [also] links the sign of these characterized viewers to the responses of *real* viewers as the latter provide a material response to the text's rhetorical demand. (97-98)

In the case of *Hockey Night in Canada* we have seen how individual performance is valorised at the expense of "team work" and how the aggressive and offensive (vs. defensive) aspects of hockey are focussed on. We've also seen the mediating role that expert opinion plays in providing interpretative frameworks as to how the game "should" be understood. Furthermore, we have seen how advertising both exploits and reinforces gender and regional identities, in ways that can be either negative or positive, but which are always instrumentalised in service of a given product. There is clearly an ideological dimension to television; it presents us with representations, not just (as in the telethon example) of how we should act, but also of who we should be.

As John Fiske notes, a text invariably "produces a socially located position and invites the viewer to occupy it in order to understand it easily and unproblematically" (TC 25). However he, along with other Cultural Studies theorists (Hall, Morley, et al.) also argues that we also construct oppositional and negotiated meanings from texts, and television is no exception. Mainstream television is an example of what Stuart Hall, following Gramsci, terms a *hegemonic* discourse, but there are also counter-discourses, and the subject positions offered me by television discourse are not necessarily ones I will assume, at least not in an unmediated way. According to Fiske and Hartley, television encoders are very aware of the possibility of "aberrant decoding"(81) and to some extent, this accounts for the highly conventional nature of most television messages. However it is still the case that textual representations of hockey are open to plural readings, and *Hockey Night in Canada* is no exception.

Fan Identities and "live" hockey:

In theory, the solution for those who do not wish to experience hockey through the eye of the television camera, is to actually go and watch the game "live." But even here, to greater or lesser degrees, the game itself is re-articulated as a certain kind of cultural event, as well as being "packaged" as entertainment. "The interface between capitalist industries and everyday life is negotiated not only textually, but also spatially and institutionally" (Fiske UPC 152). The shopping mall is one such space (Fiske UPC 41); the hockey arena is another. Also, while pickup games on community rinks are still relatively spontaneous events, NHL games played in arenas such as the Sky-reach Centre are comparable to rock concerts in their scale, scope and "production values." Commercial interests, conventional notions about the nature of the audience, and constraints arising from the fact that live hockey is also the "raw material" for televised hockey, have all had profound effects on the experience of attending a major league game.

Today, NHL hockey is (almost) invariably televised, by CBC's *Hockey Night in Canada*, CTV's *Sportsnet*, and/or a variety of local cable companies, and this has changed live hockey in a number of ways. First, there is the increasing extent to which the NHL schedule is determined by the requirements of television. The fact that *Hockey Night in Canada* has opted to broadcast two Saturday night games, means that live games that had traditionally started at six or seven o'clock Mountain or Pacific now begin at eight (p.m.). The combined effects of market-driven NHL expansion and the demands of the American TV Networks have meant more afternoon games, and (sadly) local audiences are no longer able to see each team live at least once per season. The situation is even more chaotic during the play-offs.

Furthermore, there is a definite sense in which the in-house audience has been subordinated to the millions of viewers in the electronic audience and this effects both audience behaviours and events on the ice. The most serious impact probably results from the many commercial breaks that occur during televised hockey. These disrupt the "flow" of the game, and create long pauses in which both player activity and audience attention are "put on hold". As well, the presence of television cameras in the arena encourages the audience to represent itself in ways calculated to "catch the (electronic) eye" and so to "get on TV." In Skyreach Centre in Edmonton, if an Oilers game is being broadcast on *Hockey Night in Canada*, it is commonplace to see brightly coloured signs involving the initials "CBC" held high by enthusiastic fans.[7] It is as if those in attendance intuitively realise that they are merely the "studio" audience, but the possibility of being seen by the (paradoxically) "real" virtual audience inspires them to forsake the role of audience member for that of performer.

This blurring of the boundaries between spectatorship and performance and between "reality" and "TV reality" has escalated since the advent of the aptly named Sony JumboTrons. These huge screens have been installed in arenas and sports stadiums all over the world. In the case of hockey arenas, they have supplanted the smaller (and vastly more innocuous) centre-ice shot clocks, and have changed the nature of the "live" event significantly. First, it leads to a kind of "double-vision" on the part of the audience, since one of the things the JumboTron does is follow the on-ice action, rather like a gigantic television monitor. It also provides close-ups and instant replays which, as noted earlier, alter our spatial and temporal perceptions of the game, respectively.

The JumboTron however has other functions that have little to do with, --and may even detract from-- events taking place on the ice. It projects cartoons, quizzes, the team logo, and numerous other visual "fillers," primarily -- but not exclusively -- during the intervals when play is stopped (e.g. while players and live audience alike are forced to wait out TV commercials). The JumboTron's camera operator also spends large amounts of time, when the game *is* going on, focussing on members of the audience, and projecting their larger-than-life images back --to them *and* to the several thousand others who are (at least potentially) "part of the show." Tony Bennett, drawing on Foucault, describes how spectacle, display, and what he terms "the exhibitionary complex" work together with (rather than against) hidden techniques of surveillance. In describing the most famous 19th Century examples of each he points out that: "The Panopticon was designed to that everyone could be seen; the Crystal Palace so that everyone could see" (Bennett 128). He elaborates:

> The peculiarity of the exhibitionary complex is not to be found in its reversal of the Panopticon. Rather it consists in its incorporation of aspects of those principles together with those of the panorama, forming a technology of vision which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd but to regulate it, and *to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.* (Bennett 131-132)

We are reminded that the term "monitor" has another meaning and function, i.e. someone who, or something which, supervises our conduct.

The JumboTron, it turns out "regulates" the audience in several ways: For one thing, it selectively constructs "exemplary" fan identities. Not all members of the audience are rendered visible; some fans are chosen to represent the group as a whole, others are excluded. Typically the JumboTron displays the faces (and sometimes the forms) of:

- Cute children
- Pretty, young (usually blonde) women
- Young couples (who, when framed by a heart-shaped border, are then expected to kiss -- a private act performed before the public gaze.)
- People (usually young men) acting up, or acting out (dancing in the aisles, waving banners, wearing costumes, etc. etc.)

However the faces of the elderly, the plain, the irate, the bored, are seen only often enough to ensure their status as marginalised. They are "there," but not worthy of the audiences' attention.

As well, there is a voyeuristic aspect to the activities of this candid camera, which frequently captures the looks of amazement on the faces of unsuspecting audience members when they suddenly realise that, while in the act of watching the game, they too are being watched. This invasive gaze, combined with the fact that the camera is "blind" to certain modes of expression (e.g. rude gestures made at referees or opposing players -- very much a part of live hockey) has a censoring effect both on what fans actually do (most of us act differently when we know we are being watched) and on which images and gestures are permitted to "represent" fan behaviours.

Furthermore, because the JumboTron makes the audience itself a focal point (in contrast with the network television cameras which only pan the stands occasionally) it has created a kind of subculture of fans who appear to pay more attention to the JumboTron than they do to the fact that there is an actual hockey game being played in the same building. They dress and perform with the sole aim of ensuring that the JumboTron will capture their image and feed it back to them, providing fifteen seconds of celebrity/visibility, albeit of a limited sort. This fixation on an electronic representation of their fan selves (to the near-exclusion of actually *being* a fan) is reminiscent of Baudrillard's well-known simulation thesis. Baudrillard describes a world in which "the map precedes the territory --*precession of simulacra*-- [and] engenders the territory" (Baudrillard 1) and in which we see the substitution of "the signs of the real for the real" (2).[8]

Not only does the JumboTron construct new ways of seeing and being seen, it also works to break down what might be described as the "oral tradition" of the live audience. Hockey audiences have only a limited repertoire through which they are allowed to express their pleasure or displeasure: they can cheer, or they can boo (in each case, their vocal responses may be enhanced by noisemakers, gestures, or if driven to extremes, throwing objects on the ice).[9] However, traditionally all these expressions of pleasure/displeasure were *dialogical*, that is to say, they occurred in direct response to events taking place on the ice. The JumboTron has changed all this. At seemingly random points in the game it will suddenly flash the "NOISE" command on the screens, followed by the image of the "Fan-o-meter" a dial which measures the volume of audience response, thus severing an important connection between the players and their fans. This is not to say that spontaneous cheering has ceased all together --it hasn't -- but the effect of the JumboTron is to de-semanticize the already limited fan vocabulary by (literally) reducing it to meaningless "noise."

All the above bears out the claim that hockey audiences, be they television or live, are the target of all kinds of (attempted) manipulations. Usually, this targeting is market-driven, but such things as a perceived need for social control, and other more general cultural requirements of the type discussed in Chapter I, may come into play as well (e.g. sporting events are among the few places where national anthems are still played and honoured). The ways in which hockey fans attempt to resist these manipulative attempts to reduce them to the status of "cultural dopes" is discussed in the next section.

Audiences as "Productive Consumers":

As mentioned earlier, many theorists of popular culture argue that audiences are capable and creative "resisters" of would-be imposed meanings. According to John Fiske, fan communities:

> …select from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and take them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. They are then reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intensely signifying popular culture. (Fiske CEF 30)

What is true of fans in general is also true of sports fans. Gruneau and Whitson note that they:

> …sometimes reveal a surprisingly active side: as players themselves, chronic letter-writers to editors or callers to phone-in radio programs, lobbyists for

> recreational land use, collectors, coaches, volunteers, consumers of volumes of secondary background materials and oral historians. (22-23)

Fiske emphasises that this process "must be understood in terms of productivity, not of reception" (37). In his analysis of how fan communities construct their own resistant meanings from the products of the culture industries, he identifies three different categories. The first of these processes, which he calls "semiotic productivity" (Fiske CEF 37) has to do with inner and personalised "identifications" with a cultural commodity. Here Fiske makes reference to Janice Radway's work on romance readers who "legitimated their own feminine values against patriarchal ones"[10] (Fiske 37). Semiotic productivity, as Fiske describes it, can only be understood through in-depth interviews (a form audience research) and is therefore beyond the scope of this project. Fortunately, since the 1980s, "ethnographies of audiences have produced numerous examples of this form of productivity"(37).

Fiske's second category, "enunciative productivity" is already visible and audible to the public eye and ear. It is part of a discursive system. "Fan talk" is one example of this form of productivity, and certainly fans discuss hockey during period breaks at live games, but also in numerous other venues: at work; on the way to work; at social gatherings (much to the dismay of non-fans) and so on. According to Fiske, "much of the pleasure of fandom lies in the fan talk that it produces" (CEF 38). However, enunciative productivity is not restricted to verbal forms of expression. "The styling of hair or make-up, the choice of clothes or accessories, are ways of constructing *a social identity and therefore asserting one's membership of (sic) a particular...community*"(CEF 38 emphasis added). This is certainly true in the case of hockey fans. A great many fans (myself included) wear team jerseys to the games; others paint their faces with team colours, wave banners and organise cheers and chants (e.g. the practice of "waving") and so on. In Brazil, soccer fans who express themselves in this manner are known as *torcedores-simbolo* or "symbol fans." These include Joe Radio who "has a certificate proclaiming him 'the most irritating fan in Brazil'"[11] and a host of others:

> Fifty yards from Joe Radio I meet Dona Miriquinha. She is seventy-five and is dressed from head to toe in Sport's [her team] colours: black and red. She has never worn any other colour for twenty-five years. This time she has on a red bandana and a long red shirt with black lapels. She is quietly dancing around a red and black umbrella, like a starlet from a silent movie. (Bellos 122)

In analysing this phenomenon as it manifests itself in the UK, Fiske notes that:

> British soccer fans, many of whom are socially and economically disempowered males, can, when wearing their own colors and when in their own community of fans, exhibit empowered behaviour that may at times become violent and lethal but which more typically confines itself to assertiveness. (CEF 38)

Brazilian soccer fans have taken the notion of fan empowerment to new heights. They have fan clubs that number in the tens of thousands (Bellos 131). One particular fan club, The Hawks of the Faithful (supporters of the Sao Paolo Corinthians) has 56,000 members who have a reputation as Brazil's equivalent to British hooligans:

> At matches they are Corinthians most fanatical fans. They have a banner that is so heavy it takes three hundred people to carry it and when unrolled is 100m long and 40m deep. They chant the loudest and their drumming is the most

> awesome…The Hawks are feared by everyone -- even Corinthians itself. (Bellos 135)

Their membership includes "black and mixed-race and poor"(Bellos 133) as well as middle class whites (the minority). As one young member puts it: " 'There are Hawks who are hairdressers and there are Hawks who are High Court judges. We will never end! We will carry our Banners to Hell!' " (133).

In the case of hockey, we've seen several instances of post-Stanley Cup "riots," some of which were nothing more than jubilant (and astonishingly well-behaved) city-wide street parties[12] while others provided a minority with an excuse for brawling and acts of vandalism.

Fiske further sees the instances of enunciative productivity which occur at "live games" as evidence of the audiences' desire to break down the barriers separating them from the play. These barriers (fences, walls, security guards, etc), he asserts, are:

> …evidence not only of the fans' desire to participate (however disruptively) but also of the dominant culture's need to maintain the disciplinary distance between text and reader: a function that in the academic arena is performed by the critic who polices the meanings of a text and its relationship to its readers in a way that differs from the disciplinary apparatus on sports grounds only by being intellectual rather than physical. (CEF 41)

The third category Fiske refers to is "textual productivity" and this includes a range of fan-produced texts and images. He mentions letters, "fanzines," paintings or drawings, and home videos as examples, noting that these texts differ from those that are professionally produced only in that they are not aimed at making a profit, and are "narrowcast" (amongst fan subcultures) rather than broadcast (via the mass media). Not surprisingly, there are numerous examples of this type of productivity in the case of hockey.[13] One of the most striking has been the extent to which the audience has "pirated" the script of the "Joe Canadian rant."

The "rant" was originally part of a Molson's Canadian advertising campaign aimed at selling their product (i.e. a brand of beer of the same name). It takes the form of a dramatic monologue, narrated by a typical (i.e. middle-sized, conservatively-dressed, stunningly ordinary-looking) "Canadian." After clearing his throat, and looking a bit nervous, "Joe" begins his speech by correcting some commonly-held misconceptions about the "Great White North":

> Hey, I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader.... I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber, or own a dogsled.... And I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada, although I'm certain they're really really nice.

However, as the monologue continues, he gradually becomes more impassioned, and the message becomes more clearly one of asserting our differences from the Americans: "I have a Prime Minister, not a president… and it is pronounced 'zed' --not 'zee'-- 'zed' !!!!" After proudly pointing out that Canada is "the first nation of hockey!… and the best part of North America" he concludes his rant with a triumphant shout of "My name is Joe!! And *I Am Canadian*!!! (The Beaver Bites Back -- with a vengeance!)[14]

After the first "Joe Canadian rant" advertisements appeared on *Hockey Night in Canada,* members of the (hockey-viewing) Canadian public began to create their own variations on similar themes. A Brewery lockout in Edmonton, Alberta (which took place in the summer of 2000) inspired a rant that included lines such as "I have a mortgage, not a corner office, and I crush cans, not spirits....My name is Local 285!! And I Am a Canadian Autoworker!!!." In the same year, striking healthcare support staff also produced a rant that began with the following:

> I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader. I'm a hospital worker....I don't live in an igloo, eat blubber or own a dogsled. They're all too expensive on my wages...I don't know Ralph Klein from Calgary, though I've heard him calling us rioters, special interest groups, and left wing nuts on T.V.....

The (predominantly female and immigrant) striking hospital workers' version concluded with the statement that: "Our name, by the way, is not Joe. It is your *average* 'Joe' or 'Josephine,' ...and proud to be Canadian, eh? (even if some of us aren't yet)." More recently, anonymous parodies have been circulating freely via email. Most of these concentrate on exploding ethnic stereotypes, e.g. the "I Am Italian" variant contains lines like "I don't eat pasta every night or drive a Camaro...and it's pronounced ESPRESSO, not EX-PRESSO." (see: Appendix 'A' for the full texts of the original rant as well as some other examples of fan-produced parodies).

There are other forms of audience productivity that combine enunciative and textual elements in interesting ways. The increasing accessibility and popularity of the Internet has led to a proliferation of fan web sites having to do with hockey (see: Appendix 'B' for a sample web page). These provide articles (by both fans and journalists) snippets of hockey trivia, visual images, etc., all of which can be downloaded. Many of these sites are interactive, and participation/ dialogue is encouraged through contact email addresses, and in some cases, on-line chatrooms.

Hockey Pools or "Drafts" are another form of fan participation that appear to be on the rise, and at least one web site "Officepools" (www.officepools.com) exists for the sole purpose of providing pools with daily statistical updates (for a minimal fee). Last year (2001-02) over 100,000 individual participants logged on to "Officepools" on a daily basis to check how many points they accumulated from the previous night's games.

I myself participate in one such hockey pool, and have done so since the pool's inception in 1979. Our pool is consciously modelled after a "real" league: Each year, we protect a certain number of players from the previous year's team roster, and draft a certain number of new players (including goalies). We have an "equalization" round, and draft order depends on the "standings" (point-wise) of each team. We also have farm teams so that when a player is injured we can "send him down" and bring up a replacement. What's more, we (half-seriously) refer to ourselves as "general managers" and, during the "off-season" assiduously scout for prospects. Best of all, the winner has his name engraved on a "cup" (a pewter beer mug) and has the privilege of possessing this trophy for the following season.

Over the years, the event itself (which, like other drafts, occurs every autumn at the start of the NHL season) gradually became subordinate to the draft as an institution. It has a textual life of its own involving reams of team rosters, statistics, and most importantly, the email exchanges that occur on a regular basis (see Appendix 'C') and serve to "keep the draft alive" during the summer months when our teams are dormant. Recently, the National Eternal Hockey Draft (the name reflects both its ongoing nature and the fact that our membership spans the nation "from sea (Sookh, BC) to sea (Halifax NS)" has taken to photodocumenting its annual celebratory gettogethers, and I suspect (or fear) that sooner or later, someone will declare him/herself our "official" historian. Money does change hands, but this draft (and I would guess many others) is primarily about friendship, community and, of course, the love of hockey.

Conclusion:

There are many other examples of how the increasing commercialisation of professional hockey has changed the ways in which the game represents itself to --or rather is "packaged" for -- its audience. Arena space has become increasingly segregated by ticket price, and there are fewer common areas in which fans from the gallery mingle with those from the executive boxes. The venues themselves are no longer named after Greek and Roman amphitheatres (the Olympiad; the Coliseum) but instead bear the names of corporate interests (the Molson Centre; the Sky-Reach Centre, etc.) Then, too, there is the inevitable presence of advertising on the boards, which is aimed at both "live" and TV audiences. However, as we saw above, the unintended uses made of the “Joe Canadian” rant show that even the most cleverly crafted advertisements can be volleyed back at their producers. Molson's aim was to exploit nationalism to sell beer; what happened instead was that a beer ad ended up (inadvertently) "selling" nationalism – a nationalism which was specifically articulated as a "discourse of resistance" (This is not to say that there weren't increases in beer sales as a result of the ad's popularity -- there may well have been -- but, if so, this is secondary to the fact that it provided an appropriatable "script.")

As well, there is every likelihood *Hockey Night in Canada* will not remain as influential as in the past. The French Language network will surely suffer from Radio

Canada's loss of the rights to the Montreal Canadiens games (to a local commercial cable company) a devastating blow to audiences in rural Quebec, the very hinterland that produced Carrier's "The Hockey Sweater" as well as many of the game's greatest players. Recalling Raymond Williams' argument regarding the importance of "flow," it seems likely that the proliferation of "sports channels" some of which carry hockey (although it usually takes a "back seat" to basketball and baseball) will also have an impact. Watching hockey on TSN or Sports Net will be a different experience from watching it on the CBC since "the game" is longer adjacent to quintessentially Canadian programming like the now-defunct *Front Page Challenge (*a quiz show that starred, among others, *Ur*-Canadian Pierre Berton). In contrast to the CBC, sports channels work to construct a homogeneous audience of generic sports fans (the preferred template is young, vaguely "jockish" and male) submerging the distinctions between individual sports and games and emphasising the extent to which they are all "entertainment." How successful they will be in doing so remains to be seen, as it is equally likely that audiences will continue to appropriate, “poach,” and produce our own meanings, as we struggle to hold on to our vanishing game.

Notes to Chapter VII

[1] (Hornby 186)

[2] Crowd chant, Northlands Coliseum, Stanley Cup Finals, Edmonton, Alberta, April 1988. The Stanley Cup did remain in Edmonton. Four months later, in August 1988, Wayne Gretzky was sold to the Los Angeles Kings, an attempted "quick fix" of then-Oiler owner Peter Pocklington's financial problems.

[3] There are also parallels (writhing sacrificial figures, etc.) with Dante's *Inferno.*

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[4] Events such as the murder of John Lennon, John Hinkley's 1981 attack on Ronald Reagan (inspired by his obsession with movie star Jodie Foster), and the violence at the 1969 Rolling Stones concert at Altamont,California, have all contributed to negative preconceptions on the part of the public.

[5] On 15th April 1989 at the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, ninety-six Liverpool fans were killed, hundreds more were injured and many thousands traumatised when an appalling failure of crowd management coupled with flawed architectural features, resulted in massive overcrowding in the central pens holding Liverpool supporters at the Leppings Lane Terrace at Hillsborough.

[6] "Coach's Corner" was dealt with in the Chapter VI.

[7] Last winter, during a game being televised from the Skyreach Centre in Edmonton, I found myself sitting behind two little boys who were vigorously waving a "CBC" sign which read "Cherry Believes in Canada."

[8] Baudrillard goes on to argue that the "telescoping collapse of the two traditional poles [medium/message; subject/object]" (30-31) takes us beyond panoptic space, to witness "the abolition of the spectacular" (30). My own view is closer to that of Foucault and Bennett.

[9] It's a universal hockey "tradition" to throw hats when a player scores a "hat trick" (three goals in the same game). In Detroit, octopi have historically been thrown, and fans of the Florida Panthers littered the ice with rubber rats in the mid-nineties playoff series against the Pittsburgh Penguins.

[10] Radway herself cautions against being too quick to characterise "romance reading as incipiently subversive or oppositional behaviour" (481) since the romance formula also tends to legitimate the sexual division of labour and idealise women's role in the domestic sphere.

[11] Alex Bellos describes Joe Radio, a retired military policeman..."standing...directly behind the opposing team's dugout...shouting non-stop obscenities at the visiting coach and players...He has brought along an antique radio, which is rested on the waist-high wall in front of him. It is blaring at full volume. Like his own utterances, the radio is aimed at the visiting team's bench"(121).

[12] I witnessed one such event on the occasion of the Edmonton Oiler's first Stanley Cup victory.

[13] I recall how, as a girl of twelve, I sketched a portrait of my childhood hockey hero, Gordie Howe, and mailed it to him to be autographed (see Appendix 'D'). For weeks, I waited and watched our rural Alberta mailbox. Finally the autographed drawing came back to me, along with a glossy 8x11 colour photo of (a much younger) Gordie in his Redwing uniform.

[14] A later "I am Canadian" advertisement actually does feature a beaver buddy that savages a hapless American who has made the mistake of sneering at his Canadian companion.

CONCLUSION: The Obscurity Ahead

"But the Angel is immortal, and our faces are turned towards the obscurity ahead...."[1]

-Benedict Anderson

"I'm not mourning the passing of the' good old days.' I'm lamenting the lack of good days, period."[2]

-Paul Quarrington

One has to live Somewhere....

Gaile McGregor has described Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook* as a "prototypical Canadian novel" because it ends with "an aggregate of isolates [coming] together in mutual need and [forming] a new community" (443). A society of not two, but many, solitudes. As we saw in Chapter I, sport (including hockey) has traditionally been seen as a kind of "glue" that binds us together, as a way of inculcating values of "citizenship" (discipline, fairness, loyalty, the common good, i.e. being "part of the team") but also as a means of effacing or erasing differences which, in the less confined and controlled "arena" of society as a whole continue to divide us (centre/margin; along the lines of class/gender/ethnicity etc.).

Many of the texts looked at in this dissertation tend to support this view (recall the words of Paul Quarrington's narrator in the *King Leary* excerpt "if you want to keep a boy out of hot water, put him on ice"). At times communities are depicted as coalescing around hockey in an unproblematic fashion, and The Pond is seen as a place of nature where "even" girls (not yet fully initiated into their gender roles) can play (e.g. in the short story *The Puck Artist;* the documentary film *Shinny,* the novel *The Divine Ryans,* etc.). In other instances, hockey is presented as a vehicle for the voluntaristic assertion of community and collective identity in response to exclusions on the part of "mainstream" society. David Adams Richards' poignant portrayal of a community of outsiders in *Hockey Dreams* is a case in point. As well, the television series *Power Play* and the film *Les Boys* address the issue of homophobia and resolve it in a positive fashion (i.e. team loyalty wins the day). Also, in the latter, class differences are transcended and individual class-based identities erased by their shared identity as players, i.e. as "les boys." *The Globe and Mail* commenting on a real-life example (i.e. the racially mixed Opaskwayak Cree Nation hockey team, the "Blizzard") even goes so far as to suggest that hockey has the power to heal the wounds of racism[3].

Hockey communities involve both arrivals and departures. From its inception, professional hockey has brought young men ("raw material" to be "exported") from the rural margins to the cosmopolitan centres and some (Don Cherry is a noteworthy example) have made a career out of valorising hockey as a way for hard working lads of humble origins to join the "community" of the rich and famous. In some instances (e.g. Wayne Gretzky, as Gruneau and Whitson point out) this type of "Cinderella story" has proven to be spectacularly true, but Roy MacGregor's *The Last Season* reminds us of what happens when the dream collapses, and the fate of Felix Batterinski raises the ghosts of Brian "Spinner" Spencer, Brian Fogarty, and other casualties of the game. ("If you hook twice the glory, you hook twice the fear"(Watson, epigraph).) In a complementary fashion, two non-fiction texts, *Net Worth* and *The Death of Hockey,* recount how player/owner differences were suppressed -- supposedly "for the good of the game" --but really in the name of increasing profits by exploiting players such as Ted Lindsay, Gordie Howe, Doug Harvey, et al.

In other cases, hockey texts are ambivalent. In *The Divine Ryans* homophobia leads to death, but also provides Draper Doyle with the leverage to achieve freedom for his mother, his sister and himself. Masculinity is glorified but it is also problematised. Finally, several of the texts, (*Power Play* is probably the most consistent example) contrast global communities with local ones and underscore our schizoid relationship with the "American Other."

Traditionally, when we think of community we think in terms of place, be it Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Raymond Williams "border country" or the archetypal Canadian small town (Mariposa, Manawaka, et al.) After all, as Canadian literary scholar W.H. New pragmatically states: "one has to live somewhere." However New also points out that in the discourse of Canadian writing that somewhere is often the past:

> Canadian writing recurrently takes characters on journeys home; far from the standard American model of eternal progress -- 'you can't go home again' -- Canadian writing advises that you must return, in order to place the past apart, to read its other-centred rules in a fresh way, and to make the present and future home, whatever its relationship with a distant childhood, your own. (New 159-160).

McGregor also affirms New's contention that, for Canadians, the past becomes a kind of place. Invoking Eli Mandel she argues that:

> The Canadian's evident desire for linearity, for connection, *tends to be temporally rather than spatially oriented*, no matter what kind of "journey" serves as its vehicle. As a result, as Mandel points out "it isn't just place we have to talk about but something more complicated and compelling: remembered place -- or beyond that-- remembered self, something lost and recovered, a kind of memory, a kind of myth." (McGregor 368, emphasis added)

But what if circumstances are perceived as having changed in such a way that the past appears threatened? What if we find ourselves wondering whether or not we have lost our place (or page) in the story of where we come from, hence who we are?

When I began this project I wanted to better understand what I saw as a contradiction or paradox, i.e. the apparent assumption (and its assertion-in-discourse) of a fundamental relationship between the game of hockey and "Canadian-ness," in the context of a globalised world where hockey, like much else, exceeds national boundaries. Graeme Turner observed a similar phenomenon in the case of representations of Australian nationalism which "have outlasted most of the political and social conditions which produced them without losing their potential for signifying Australian-ness" (RN 110). The answers, to my (to some extent unanswerable) questions about why Canadians seem so obsessive in their determination to mythologise hockey, turn out to be speculative. In the epigraph above, Benedict Anderson is referring to Walter Benjamin's Angel of History whose "face is turned towards the past" but who is caught "in a storm blowing from Paradise" and is "irresistably" propelled into the future. (Benjamin 269 quoted in Anderson 162). It appears that, while Canadians as a collectivity have been "fast- forwarded" by the impetus of globalisation, nevertheless, like Benjamin's Angel, we are looking backwards. In short, much of what seems to "drive" Canadian nationalism, including its most recent, hockey-inflected incarnation, is nostalgia. One could almost say that, in our case, nationalism *is* a form of nostalgia.

Nostalgia, Identity, Community:

Nostalgia is claimed by many (I think correctly) to be a symptomatic of the postmodern condition. Today we witness "an enormous variety of modes of communal nostalgia which, in addition to being a very simplified form of collective remembering… seem at times to constitute a flight from modernity" (Chaney 176). Nostalgia is also a mood or outlook that, until recently, has been largely associated with sentimentality, bad taste (*kitsch),* and regressive thinking:

> …nostalgia is capable of multiple manifestations, from vulgar U.S. versions of necrophiliac homage (Elvis and Marilyn impersonators) and Hollywood retrospection (*American Grafitti, Grease, etc.)* or science-fiction futurism (*Jurassic Park)* to Soviet conceptualizations of "mythic time," GDR architectural ruins and global exilic souvenirs. (Garebian D/9)

Nostalgia also, traditionally, requires both spatial, and temporal, distance; one is never nostalgic for the present, or for the near at hand. However I think that the counter arguments (advanced by Boym, Morley, Wheeler et al.) claiming that there is a potentially positive side to nostalgia are worth considering. Furthermore I agree with Wendy Wheeler that "postmodern nostalgia can most usefully be understood as a culturally significant expression of popular desire. This is not necessarily regressive and sentimental, but is the affective expression of a desire for community" (NN 94-95). She explains this more fully in the next paragraph:

> Understanding the characteristic features of postmodernism -- the nostalgic concern with past, place...images of 'home', the hybridization and pastiche of earlier forms and discourses -- can be a way both of beginning to make sense of the contemporary failure of the politics of modernity and also of exploring the kinds of languages and practices in which a progressive postmodern politics might be possible. (95)

The danger, of course, is that we will forget that these pasts were once the present, with all the treacherous metonymic connections inherent in contemporaneous "real time." Derek Sayer, commenting on the Czech author Milan Kundera observes that:

> Kundera writes luminously and honestly about nostalgia....At the beginning of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* he catches himself out feeling warm and cozy looking at faded photographs of Adolf Hitler, for no other reason than that they bring back his Brno childhood. It is an outrageous juxtaposition, and one that immediately rings true. (313)

If we agree with Anderson that historical memory involves a process of selective amnesias (204)[4] then we must also recognise that nostalgia is a form of idealisation. But if what we fear most is the total erasure of social memory, then even an idealised past seems better than none at all. As David Morley points out, even if "such nostalgic feelings are...ultimately directed towards an imaginary past of plenitude and security, *their strength is no less pertinent for the fact that their object is imaginary"* (HT 247, emphasis added). Morley also endorses Jonathon Rutherford's contention that the recent political successes of Right-wing politicians have hinged on their ability to mine the past for symbols and images that enabled them to articulate a reassuring response to postmodern uncertainties. "In the UK the Right mobilised images of the family and the nation as central themes of its hegemonic strategy while simultaneously denying (in Margaret Thatcher's case) the existence of such a thing as 'society'" (HT 247). Morley adds that there is "a widespread nostalgia"(246) for what Rapport and Dawson identify as a mythologised vision of a home that is "socially homogenous, communal, peaceful, safe and secure and people can be reintegrated within all-embracing meaningful structures and social, physical and metaphysical solidarity" (Rapport and Dawson, cited in Morley HT 246).

The standard response (and in case of Thatcherism I think it is certainly valid) to such an idealised totality is that it denies or suppresses difference (the "usual suspects" being differences of class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.). As Morley puts it "the conventional post-structuralist position follows Lyotard in equating any form of unity with 'terror'" (HT 251). Indeed debates *vis-à-vis* the pros and cons of "strategic essentialism" among and between those variously placed along the "identity politics/postmodernism(s)" axis are, by now, old hat. While identity politics served a useful purpose in deconstructing the false consensi of the Enlightenment, "to reveal the exclusionary interests at play behind their universalist gloss" (Briton 27), I think it is important to remember that it was precisely the *pretensions* to universality (to claim to be speaking of justice for all when the reality described was one of justice for a privileged few, etc.) that were false. It was not the values and goals themselves. Today we urgently need to reconstitute some broader community and, so far, identity politics have had little to contribute to this project, seemingly preferring the security of their own subcultures. Rather than ushering in a new era of "radical democracy" identity politics have instead generated internal elites who, having found their respective niches in the system, seem oddly surprised when that same system dismisses them as "special interest groups." But as Graeme Turner reminds us "*all* forms of collective identity are culturally produced" (MN 123, emphasis added) and even communities based on the readily naturalisable categories of gender, ethnicity, and so on are --*as communities*-- imagined.

For Turner and others the goal is "to come up with a particularly radical kind of unifying discourse: one that accepts the multiplicities and contradictory natures of the interests in whose name it speaks" (124). In contrast to Iris Marion Young's contention that "the desire for community relies on the same desire for social wholeness and identification that underlies racism…ethnic chauvinism…and political sectarianism" (Young, cited in Morley HT 252) Honi Fern Haber argues that "the repression of difference …is not necessarily terroristic, if we abandon the idea of structures (or identities) as timeless or unchanging" (Haber, cited in Morley HT 251-252). Morley too is concerned with overcoming the tendency to "universalise difference" (251) stating that "the central point is that we should not equate community with the denial of difference"(253).[5] Finally, Kristeva stresses that we need to be "able to live with the others, to live *as others,* without ostracism but also without …leveling and forgetting" (STO 1-2).

The need to forsake "the timeless or unchanging" seems, at first glance, to contradict Wheeler's claim for the positive potential of nostalgia, since nostalgia speaks to the desire that some things at least ought to be "built to last." But is this really the case, at a time when "we no longer have roots, we have aerials and we no longer have origins, we have terminals" (Wark, quoted in Morley HT 175)? The desire for tradition and some form of continuity is understandable in the "disembedded and de-territorialised flux of postmodernity" (Bauman quoted in Morley 211). Certain aspects of the past remain dear to us, especially when erstwhile familiar things seem to have turned strange, and "all that is solid melts into the air" (Marx quoted in Berman 89), and one cannot help having some degree of sympathy, however qualified, for the German couple described by Michael Ignatieff who, estranged from their once-familiar home city of Frankfurt, have filled their domestic space with symbols of "a certain idea of Germany"(Morley 213). Ignatieff details it thusly: …"heavy nature paintings on the walls (from my ancestors) and … Brockhaus encyclopedia and collected works of Schiller and Goethe in the bookcases." (Ignatieff quoted in Morley 213). Morley adds that "clearly this particular domestic version of their national home functions on a micro-scale as a safe haven" (213).

The fact that we can remember when we (thought, believed, imagined) that community existed does not mean we necessarily want to embrace, in its totality, a specific model of community any more than Kundera wanted to reinstate Hitler. It could instead be a precondition for building a better one (this said in the spirit of "those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it"). But how can we learn from history when history itself is suspect?

Utopia as Dream Not Scheme or, Dancing with a Ghost:

> When time has ceased to be anything other than velocity, instantaneity and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from the lives of all peoples…through all this a question still haunts us like a spectre: What for? Whither? What then? (Meyrowitz quoted in Morley 179)

The question for those of us who still believe things could, and should, be different is how, at a time when " we no longer believe in the great 'subjects' of history -- the proletariat, the party, the West"…(Connerton 1) are we to construct a future from the rag and bone shop of the past? The fact that there is no blueprint, no recipe, no "self-help manual," in my view, is all to the good. No one wants to repeat old errors. If we stop and think about it, there are few things sillier than assuming you know the answers before you frame your questions, or that anyone can be certain where a journey will end before she/he starts out. But not being able to imagine the possibility of something better is equally -- if not more -- frightening. As Mick Jagger and Keith Richards put it "Lose your dreams, and you will lose your mind." Fortunately, we still have nostalgia and, as Boym points out " Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future" (xvi).

What future? The commonsense of today is that we are living in a post-Utopian age. We have reached "the end of history" and no longer need be concerned about the future, perfect or otherwise. Ironically, Marx too posited an "end of history" (not one of his better ideas) albeit of a different sort. An important, if unorthodox, writer in the

Marxian tradition who addressed the theme of utopia was Ernst Bloch. Accused by Lukacs and others of messianism, Bloch's engagement with Marxism is atypical (I think interestingly so) in that he claims that myths, beliefs, and fantasies should not be dismissed as mere ideological manifestations of "false consciousness." Haslett sums up:

> "Marxism's traditional suspicion of utopianism was that, content merely to imagine a better world, it would fail to create one. Bloch's defence of (concrete) utopianism was that to imagine or dream an alternative world might propel one. Rather than thinking of utopia as a place we should consider it as an aspiration towards the 'not yet' "…(Haslett 283)

Durham, following Jameson's commentaries on Bloch, summarises the "dream - *versus* - scheme" opposition thusly:

> Utopian desire should in this sense be distinguished from mythic representations of utopia, which make the paradoxical attempt to represent this as yet unimaginable future as an object for our present contemplation. As we shall see below, one cannot directly represent the fulfillment of such desires without betraying their essentially protean and processual character; for the "fulfillment" of our desire to become other than ourselves is not to be found in some ideal existence or posthistorical beatific state, but is derived from our joy in the immanent process by which the new and the different come into existence.(198)

He goes on to explain that the "tension between utopian desire and utopian myth" (198) is paralleled by a similar one between utopian and dystopian myths because "if dystopian myth represents a world in which we are incapable of formulating the desire for a different existence, utopian myth represents a world in which there is no longer a different existence to desire" (Durham 198).

For Bloch, the key to future imaginings lies in our ability to remember the past, and to use its remnants as (to borrow a phrase from Raymond Williams) "resources of hope":

> New meaning and fresh synthetic combinations can be extracted from the thinking of the past, precisely because this thinking is not yet finished, and is to be discovered and inherited by each succeeding age. The works of the past contain the premonitory and pre-figurative images of the next stage of society.... succeeding ages 're-function' the material of the past to suit their ideological requirements whether reactionary or progressive. (N. Plaice, S. Plaice, and P. Knight xxvii)

The past, as we saw in Chapter III, is full of ghosts, and recently even Jacques Derrida, has had to confront a spook or two. The elegaic tone and lack of closure of his challenge to Fukuyama's "end of history thesis" in *Specters of Marx* has led some (Ahmad 94; Lewis 147; Eagleton 87) to question the efficacy of Derrida's own brand of messianism. For Fredric Jameson, Derrida's messianism (like Bloch's) owes a lot to the thinking of Walter Benjamin:

> The very idea of the messianic ...brings the whole feeling of dashed hopes and impossibility along with it: and it is this that it means in Benjamin as well...it is a unique variety of the species hope that scarcely bears any of the latter's normal characteristics and that flourishes only in a time of absolute hopelessness (62).

Jameson is careful to point out that:

> The messianic must be sharply distinguished from the apocalyptic in Derrida's usage, which is much more specifically the thinking of the 'end' and to which the charge of critical and negative doxa that nowadays attaches to revolution and the Utopian, becomes attached. (63)

For Jameson it is Fukuyama's apocalyptic pronouncements on the death of the past and his positing of the "market universe which is a perpetual present" (63) that represents true stasis and achieved teleology. Jameson contrasts this with the "historicity" of the messianic, adding that "the messianic is spectral, it is the spectrality of the future, the other dimension, that answers to the haunting spectrality of the past" (Jameson 64).

Finally, for Boym, because nostalgia functions as "an intermediary between collective and individual memory" (54), it has the potential to both help build community and imagine a future. For her, we are emphatically not at the "end of history," and she reminds us that:

> Reflective nostalgia has a utopian dimension that consists in the exploration of other potentialities and unfulfilled promises of modern happiness. It resists both the total reconstruction of the local culture and the triumphant indifference of technocratic globalism. Instead of the economic globalism from above, the reflective nostalgics can create a global diasporic solidarity based on the experience of immigration and internal multiculturalism. (Boym 342)

Hockey in the 21st Century: The Empire Skates Back?

> When the target audience is international, it is often the distinctively national, as well as class or racial associations that tend to be either de-emphasized or transformed into something that other audiences will relate to and identify with.

> And so it may be with the "Canadianness" of hockey. At its top levels hockey will most likely become a much less Canadian game. As this occurs, we will simply have to get used to the "loss," if we want to enjoy the game's presence in global popular culture. (Gruneau and Whitson 282)

In 1970, Brian Conacher, self-described "journeyman hockey player," and son of sports legend Lionel Conacher, hung up his skates, stating that he was retiring "from the game I loved, but from the business I had grown to find unbearable" (Conacher 117). Today, many of the things that Kidd and McFarlane predicted back in the 1970s have come to pass. The NHL continues to cater to "big market" (i.e. American) franchises. High player salaries, combined with fact that "hockey alone among the professional team sports doesn't have a major revenue-sharing agreement" (Cruise and Griffiths 326), have meant that (with the possible exception of Toronto) Canadian franchises are facing the very real possibility of extinction. Season tickets to watch even small market teams like the Edmonton Oilers are already too expensive for many. These inequities, if not entirely produced, are certainly exacerbated, by economic globalisation. There are parallels here with the poor of Brazil, who cannot afford to buy tickets to "the Sambodromo…where the annual carnival parade is now held" (Morley HT 198) and who "have to watch on TV the spectacle that develops only a few feet away from them" (Morely HT 198)[6]. Even that simple, yet symbolic, object, the hockey stick, once hand-made by Mi'kmaq carvers, is now made of graphite and manufactured transnationally (Dowbiggin 4) while the players themselves are walking (or rather skating) billboards, augmenting their already inflated salaries with endorsement money. As one former hockey equipment manufacturer puts it "The world's become a branded nightmare. It's a branded nightmare out there" (Dowbiggin 93).

Does all this mean then that "the mystique of Canadian hockey…[will be] reduced -- like so much of the heritage industry today -- to the marketing of nostalgia" (Gruneau and Whitson 283). The situation vis-à-vis professional hockey does seem bleak, but perhaps Canadians can take heart in the knowledge that, at the amateur level at least "our" game has proliferated on a global scale. As Dave Bidini's *Tropic of Hockey* shows, in the case of hockey the local and global have come together in ways that might well astonish the hockey traditionalist. Bidini's quest for the game "in unlikely places" was inspired by a sense of loss and the desire to:

> See hockey as it was before it became complicated by economics, corporate lust, the ravages of progress; before the pro game had betrayed tradition for quick-buck teams and a style that relied more on chalkboard patterns than spontaneous, tongue-wagging river play. Maybe I could find a bunch of kids who'd never heard of Alexei Yashin, who'd never been prompted by a scoreboard [i.e. JumboTron] command. Maybe I could see hockey the way it was once played here: a game of passion, of the people. (Bidini TH xviii).

Bidini's pursuit of a version of hockey not tainted by big money and bad management, (not to mention the "left-wing lock" and "the neutral zone trap") takes him to China, Transylvania[7], and even the United Arab Emirates[8]. It also provides him with the opportunity to play on a variety of foreign teams. His journey is successful, in that he finds satisfying hockey and sense of community in "the company of strangers," and his departure from the UAE is marked by regrets:

> During my seven days in Dubai I'd grown as close to the Falcons as any team I've played on…Hockey had allowed me a rapport with these strangers, my Arab brothers of the ice. Playing with the Falcons gave me the same feeling I've had countless nights while skating with the Morningstars[9], love and acceptance and brotherhood. But with one difference -- I would never see the Falcons again. (TH 214)

In Transylvania Bidini finds parallels with the symbolic power invested in hockey by Canadians:

> Just as the Ciuc fans encouraged players from their community to fight against the imperialists from Bucharest, there was once a time when the dreams of citizens in Toronto, Montreal, and other Canadian cities were acted out by skaters with whom they shared a heritage, and whose teams wilfully triumphed over rival Americans. (TH 252)

Bidini however, suggests that this is how Canadian hockey "used to be," but (perhaps) is no longer. The question then becomes since "true" or "pure" hockey is languishing at home, is its globalised equivalent still "Canadian"? The only reply I can venture takes the form of another question: are Coca-cola, McDonald's and baseball perceived as less American simply because these highly visible cultural symbols are now consumed globally? I suspect most of us would agree that they are not.

Bidini's concern (and nostalgia for the "real" game) is understandable, but there are also encouraging signs on hockey's home front. Gruneau and Whitson appear to take heart from "the extent to which the transformations of hockey at the top levels…have also been accompanied by a resurgence of interest at the recreational and community levels" (282). They add that:

> Old-timers hockey and industrial hockey are booming, as are hockey programs for girls, women and special populations. There has also been a remarkable growth in organized ball hockey…and more and more children are playing a …newer version of ball hockey wearing "in-line" skates. At the spectator level, teams like the NHL Old-timers and the Flying Fathers continue to play to large crowds.…As the price of NHL hockey goes up in Edmonton and Vancouver there is increasing talk of bringing back junior hockey. Moreover, with the addition of Charlottetown the American Hockey League has six teams in Maritime cities thereby providing plenty of good quality hockey for a substantial regional Canadian audience. (282-283)

Gruneau and Whitson are speaking from the vantage point of the early nineteen nineties. Since that time women's hockey in Canada has received an increasing amount of attention, culminating in the Canadian Women's Team's gold medal victory in Salt Lake City, after their disappointment in the previous Winter Olympics at Nagano. Although "women have been playing hockey for over 100 years" (Avery and Stevens 14), it is only relatively recently that it has begun to "come into its own"[10] . Today, many of those in women's hockey are wondering, since the advent of "Olympics and world championships, what else is there to add to the sport? Maybe a professional league?" (Avery and Stevens 247). The argument has also been made re. the likelihood of a large and enthusiastic audience for women's hockey because "women have something more to offer--hockey the way it should be--graceful, precise and fast" (Avery and Stevens 247).

The idea of "hockey the way it should be" and "the way it was" persists in the minds of Canadians, as does the connection/ association with our national community. When Canada won "double gold" in Salt Lake City, Canadians responded with passion.[11] Television ratings for the Canada vs. US men's final (held Sunday Feb 24 2002) were the highest in the recorded history of Canadian programming. The following Monday, as returning athletes were met by fans in Canadian airports "the loudest cheers were reserved for the gold-medal winning women's hockey team"(Monchuk D4). That same day on CBC Radio One, *This Morning* host Shelagh Rogers summed up the Olympic hockey victories in one word: "Shakespearean." The Canadian media were virtually unanimous in their enthusiasm, and well aware of what (symbolically) was at stake. As one reporter put it: "no matter how much sovereignty we've lost, no matter how little our little loonie is worth, we're *cool*"! (Todd D/4) There was, of course, the magical aspect as well, when a Canadian ice-maker buried a loonie at center ice in an attempt to bring luck to the Canadian teams. Journalists described the "lucky loonie" as:

> A coin so powerful that even the American sorceress, the referee Stacey Livingston, couldn't undo its 62-cent magic, not even when she called eight straight penalties on our brave Canadian warrior women.
>
> It's the coin that brought the men's hockey gold back where it belongs. The magic talisman…destined for the Hockey Hall of Fame in a proud nation to the north.

A fairy tale. Cool. (Todd D/4)

* * * *

Where hockey is concerned, the NHL has, in a negative sense, functioned as a kind of Master Narrative and my suspicion is that if hockey singular were to become plural we would likely see greater access to, and enjoyment of, the game itself. The Olympics have confirmed that, in the eyes of many, the most exciting hockey today is not being played in the NHL. There is of course, the ever-present threat that the NHL will continue to "cherry pick" the best amateur players, as they have done for decades (Kidd and McFarlane) and/or refuse to allow the players who "belong" to league teams to compete for their home countries in the Olympics. Also, where the mythology of hockey is concerned, whether or not hockey traditionalists would consider anything other than NHL hockey to be "world class" is a vexing question.

Whatever the future may hold in store for hockey, I am reasonably certain that we will look continue to look to the past for our measures of excellence. In the future, however, our heroes will include Hayley Wickenheiser and Cassie Campbell as well as Howie Morenz, Gordie Howe, Rocket Richard, and the first truly global (in both the good and the bad sense) hockey star, Wayne Gretzky. Meanwhile, beyond the bounds or organised hockey, in a realm where "you make your own rules," Canadians are still playing, and celebrating, the game of shinny. It's worth remembering --lest we forget that our "romantic" connection to ice and snow is material as well as mystical -- that as long as water freezes this will likely remain the case.

Conclusion:

Attempts to save some kind of (admittedly reconstructed) past are a necessary part of both establishing a sense of self (identity is intimately linked to memory) and imagining a possible future. It is my contention that hockey provides us with a vehicle for doing all the above. I suppose I am arguing, in part, that "making believe" and dreaming possibilities, are not simply forms of escapism (of the imposed sort feared by the Frankfurt School et al.) but rather ways of reconfiguring escapism into something more productive. Perhaps by creating ideal worlds inside our heads, we are keeping the possibility of better worlds alive, at a time when there is almost no remaining public or psychic space available to us. At a time when "we are shy imaginers of Utopias on hold" (Cockburn 2) …"where *else* but to the dead past can imagination turn in order to conceptualise a world that is 'not-yet'"? (Benjamin, cited in Buck-Morss 124).

As Svetlana Boym rightly states: "Contemporary nostalgia is not so much about the past as about the vanishing present" (Boym 351). Hockey stories tell us that if Aurel Joliet can "return," then why not other heroes, and is it ever wrong to hope. The "nostalgic" film *Shinny* ends with the admonition that we should be our own heroes. I leave you with the thoughts of Claude Levi-Strauss:

> If men have always been concerned with only one task -- how to create a society fit to live in--the forces that inspired our distant ancestors are also present in us. Nothing is settled; everything can still be altered. What was done, but turned out wrong can be done again. "The Golden Age" which blind superstition had placed behind (or ahead of) us, is *in us.* (392)

Notes to Conclusion

[1] (Anderson 162)

[2] (Quarrington 7)

[3] The Pas was the setting of the brutal rape and murder of a Cree teenager, Helen Betty Osborne, by four white men from the area.

[4] In this, Boym supports Anderson: "Only false memories can be totally recalled" (54).

[5] I worry that our penchant for explanations subsumed under the category of "Other" has atrophied into a kind of structuralist reflex that fetishes the binary *form* of difference while ignoring the qualitative aspects of the continuum of differences in the "real world").

[6] This is doubly ironic when one considers the folk roots and politicised origins of carnival.

[7] One of the chapters on hockey in Romania is playfully entitled "Where Spearing Comes From."

[8] Some of he UAE team's names were derivative, e.g. "The Riyadh Rangers," some not, e.g."The Dubai Mighty Camels."

[9] The name of the team in the Westwood (recreational) Hockey League for which Bidini plays left-wing.

[10] Avery and Stevens point out that this is in part the result of "lawsuits in the 1970s and 1980s [which] allowed girls to legally skate alongside the boys" (14).

[11] According to Shaikin "the mixing of sport and politics may be regarded as good or bad, but it is a fact that needs to be recognized in order to comprehend the political nature of the Olympics" (11).

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Appendix 'A' : "The Rant"

Original Version:

Hey, I'm not a lumberjack, or a fur trader....
I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber, or own a dogsled....
and I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada,
although I'm certain they're really really nice.

I have a Prime Minister, not a president.
I speak English and French, not American.
And I pronounce it 'about', not 'a boot'.

I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack.
I believe in peace keeping, not policing,
diversity, not assimilation,
and that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal.
A toque is a hat, a chesterfield is a couch,
and it is pronounced 'zed' not 'zee', 'zed' !!!!

Canada is the second largest landmass!
The first nation of hockey!
and the best part of North America

My name is Joe!!
And I am Canadian!!!

Variations:

I'm not a lumberjack or a fur trader. I'm a hospital worker. I help the medical staff with the care of sick Albertans. I don't live in an igloo, eat blubber or own a dogsled. They're all too expensive on my wages.

We don't have a president, matter of fact we don't have a premeier, we have a king!

I don't know Ralph Klein from Calgary though I've heard him calling us rioters, special interest groups and left wing nuts on T. V. I'm certain he's a nice ordinary beer drinker, though he should take care when around hot tubs and bigamists.

I speak English and a "petit peu" of French, but I have friends who can swear in twenty different languages.

I believe in keeping the peace and that the beaver is a proud and noble animal, not just some tree-biting rat on steroids.

I chose to live in Alberta and Canada, as many of you did from other countries and regions, because I thought it was the best place in the world and not just because we had guns and the original owners only had bows and arrows.

I believe that "Might" is not always right and that Compassion for those less fortunate is better than simply Passion for power or money.

I believe in working for a living, not begging from the rich for handouts.

Canada is the world's second largest land mass, after somewhere like maybe Russia and a politician's ego, the first nation of Universal Health Care for all and the best part of North America.
And as for bullies, well we don't give a flying hockey puck!
Our name, by the way, is not Joe.
It is your *average* "Joe" or "Josephine," dedicated hospital worker and proud to be Canadian, eh?! (Even if some of us aren't yet.)

* * * *

HEY! I AM not a millionaire or a C. E. O., nor do I own a Beemer.
And I refuse to believe that employee loyalty is not cost effective.
I will not be marginalized.

I have a mortgage and kids not a corner office.
I crush cans, not spirits.
I can proudly hold my head high and look my children in the eye.

I would rather stand on a picket line than be forced toward the poverty line.
And I refuse to believe a living wage is a luxury.
I will not take a 30% pay cut so the Breweries can add to their record profits.

And it is the 3rd Millenium not the 1930s.
And corporate violence and intimidation will not be accepted as a tactic for negotiation.
Along with my brothers and sisters I will stand up for what is right.

My name is Local 285
And I AM a CANADIAN
AUTOWORKER!

* * * *

Ciao...
I'm not a construction worker, a brick layer or a school
janitor.

I don't live in a basement, or eat pasta every night.
And I don't drive a Camaro.
And I don't know Tony, Rocco or Gino from Woodbridge,
Although I'm certain they're very, very hairy people.

I drink wine...not beer. I don't use utensils for pizza.
I believe in open bars at weddings, not cash.
And its pronounced ESPRESSO, not EX-PRESSO.

I can proudly fly my country's flag out of my car during the world cup.
Gelato IS ice cream, Biscotti ARE cookies,
Antonio Columbro IS the best of the tenors,
And it's Broo-SKetta, not Broo-SHetta!!

Italy is the ONLY country shaped like footwear,
The FIRST nation of soccer, And the BEST part of Europe!!
My name is Guiseppe !!!
AND I AM ITALIAN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

* * * *

Wai...
I'm not a cook, or a computer tech, or the owner of a
laundromat.
I don't live with my parents, I don't eat dog. I don't drive a
souped-up Civic.
And I don't know Ping, Ching or Wing from Beddington Heights
Although I'm certain they're very rice... I mean nice people.

I use chopsticks, not a fork. I rarely drive on the sidewalk.
I believe in giving cash, not gifts
And I pronounce it HELLO, not HARRO.
I can proudly wave my country's flag at a tank during a
massacre,

Dim sum IS brunch, Gwai-Los ARE white folk
Jet Li can kick Van Damme's ass anyday.
And it IS pronounced Gon Hay Fa Choi, not Gon HEE Fa

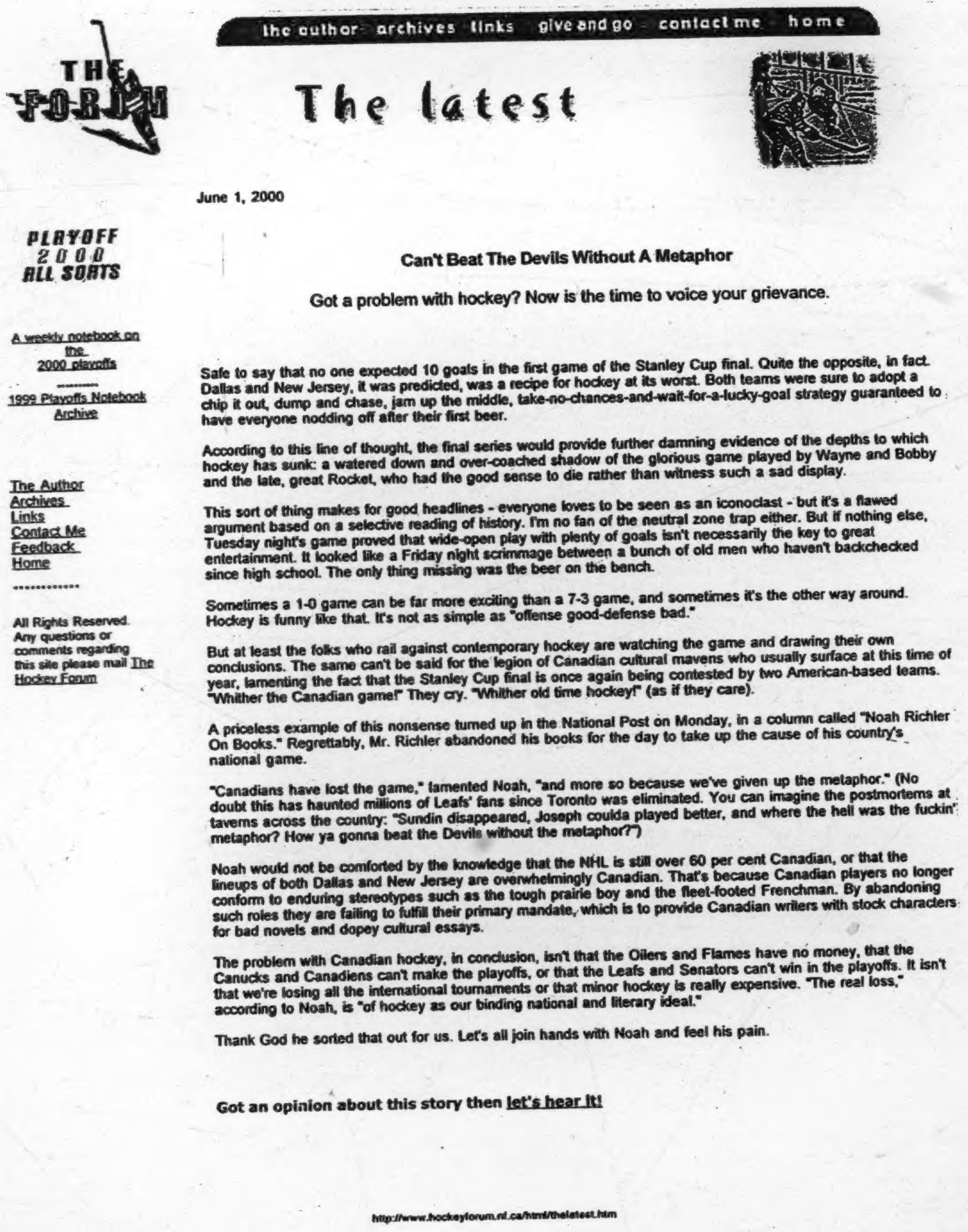
China is the LARGEST country in Asia
The FIRST nation of PING-PONG,

And the BEST remaining COMMUNIST COUNTRY!!
My name is FUNG!!!
AND I AM CHINESE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

* * * *

Wassup...
I'm not particularly intelligent, open-minded, or well-liked.
And I don't live in a safe place, eat a balanced diet,
or drive very well,
I don't know Shakespeare, Da Vinci or Gutenberg,
although I'm pretty sure they were American.
I drink beer, not water, I am outspoken, not opinionated,
Guns settle disputes, not discussions.
Winning isn't everything, it's the ONLY thing,
And it's pronounced RUFF, not ROOF.
I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack,
unless I go somewhere,
Burger King IS fine dining. Washing after peeing is for LOSERS,
Twinkies and Moon Pies ARE GOOD for breakfast,
I have a SHED, NOT a GARAGE, and WWF ACTION IS REAL!
The UNITED STATES OF AMERICA is the ONLY country in the world,
The FIRST nation of IGNORANCE,
And the BEST part of SOUTH AMERICA!!
MY NAME IS JIM-BOB, I am married to my sister,
AND I AM AMERICAN!!!!!!!

Appendix 'B': Fan Web Page



June 1, 2000

Can't Beat The Devils Without A Metaphor

Got a problem with hockey? Now is the time to voice your grievance.

Safe to say that no one expected 10 goals in the first game of the Stanley Cup final. Quite the opposite, in fact. Dallas and New Jersey, it was predicted, was a recipe for hockey at its worst. Both teams were sure to adopt a chip it out, dump and chase, jam up the middle, take-no-chances-and-wait-for-a-lucky-goal strategy guaranteed to have everyone nodding off after their first beer.

According to this line of thought, the final series would provide further damning evidence of the depths to which hockey has sunk: a watered down and over-coached shadow of the glorious game played by Wayne and Bobby and the late, great Rocket, who had the good sense to die rather than witness such a sad display.

This sort of thing makes for good headlines - everyone loves to be seen as an iconoclast - but it's a flawed argument based on a selective reading of history. I'm no fan of the neutral zone trap either. But if nothing else, Tuesday night's game proved that wide-open play with plenty of goals isn't necessarily the key to great entertainment. It looked like a Friday night scrimmage between a bunch of old men who haven't backchecked since high school. The only thing missing was the beer on the bench.

Sometimes a 1-0 game can be far more exciting than a 7-3 game, and sometimes it's the other way around. Hockey is funny like that. It's not as simple as "offense good-defense bad."

But at least the folks who rail against contemporary hockey are watching the game and drawing their own conclusions. The same can't be said for the legion of Canadian cultural mavens who usually surface at this time of year, lamenting the fact that the Stanley Cup final is once again being contested by two American-based teams. "Whither the Canadian game!" They cry. "Whither old time hockey!" (as if they care).

A priceless example of this nonsense turned up in the National Post on Monday, in a column called "Noah Richler On Books." Regrettably, Mr. Richler abandoned his books for the day to take up the cause of his country's national game.

"Canadians have lost the game," lamented Noah, "and more so because we've given up the metaphor." (No doubt this has haunted millions of Leafs' fans since Toronto was eliminated. You can imagine the postmortems at taverns across the country: "Sundin disappeared, Joseph coulda played better, and where the hell was the fuckin' metaphor? How ya gonna beat the Devils without the metaphor?")

Noah would not be comforted by the knowledge that the NHL is still over 60 per cent Canadian, or that the lineups of both Dallas and New Jersey are overwhelmingly Canadian. That's because Canadian players no longer conform to enduring stereotypes such as the tough prairie boy and the fleet-footed Frenchman. By abandoning such roles they are failing to fulfill their primary mandate, which is to provide Canadian writers with stock characters for bad novels and dopey cultural essays.

The problem with Canadian hockey, in conclusion, isn't that the Oilers and Flames have no money, that the Canucks and Canadiens can't make the playoffs, or that the Leafs and Senators can't win in the playoffs. It isn't that we're losing all the international tournaments or that minor hockey is really expensive. "The real loss," according to Noah, is "of hockey as our binding national and literary ideal."

Thank God he sorted that out for us. Let's all join hands with Noah and feel his pain.

Got an opinion about this story then let's hear it!

****

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Any questions or comments regarding this site please mail The Hockey Forum

http://www.hockeyforum.nf.ca/html/thelatest.htm

Appendix 'C': Email Exchanges

Sent: Sunday, May 19, 2002 5:52 PM
Subject: motherfuckingtucker

That little whiney snot-rag Tucker is back ?!? I thought he had a broken shoulder and we were done with his goon act. Shit. SOMEBODY HIT HIM!!! HIT HIM AGAIN!!! BREAK THE OTHER SHOULDER!!!

Subject: Re: motherfuckingtucker
Date: Sun, 19 May 2002 18:09:53 -0300
X-Priority: 3
Status:

Hit Him! Hit Him Hard !
Relax………
Don Cherry makes me ill ! Not only is he a compleat jerk , but he's also the poster boyfor homophobia * and * makes it sound /look like a good thing ! He's crazy . Earlier this post season one of you said he was a disgrace to journalism. Hahahahaha - he's no journalist , but he sure is a disgrace !

Subject: Heroes & villains
Date: Thu, 25 Apr 2002 11:13:09 -0600
X-Priority: 3
Status:

I will probably be rotting in hell before I hear anybody in the Canadian media mention what a classless bunch of thugs represents Canada's biggest city, so I guess I'll have to say it myself.

The Toronto Maple Leafs are a classless bunch of thugs. And it comes right from the top.

And, in watching them crash and burn, I haven't had this much fun since my new hero, Steve Webb, levelled Theo Fleury with the hit of the year. Not coincidentally, Webb has been the eye of the current storm as well.

Good thing I like Webb, because despite their season-long role as underdog media darlings -- until they matched up against Toronto of course -- the Islanders are not a very lovable team, led by two mercenary assholes, Yashin and Peca. So they match up fairly well against the Leafs in the classless department, with Toronto the clear winner in the area of thuggery.

Last night I went out for supper with my parents so I missed almost all the game. I did manage to time a "washroom" break to catch the last minute on the TV in the bar. A 6-on-4 powerplay was underway, and it appeared the Leafs had the worst of their classless thugs on the ice: Corson, Roberts, Tucker, Domi. They didn't score, of course, but were well-positioned for the obligatory post-Toronto-loss near-brawl that ensued after the final whistle (for the second straight night). I haven't got all the details clear -- I was at some distance, and for some reason *none* of the networks replayed or even discussed this shameful display. I did see Shayne Corson crosscheck one guy in the face, another in the back of the neck, and then go after the goalie. I see from the summaries Domi must have done something to earn a gross misconduct. Earlier in the game, I saw Gary Roberts viciously spear an Islander right in the nuts. And of course the post-game commentary crescendoed into an ear-splitting whine about the officiating.

So ended the previous game, when Don Cherry, supposedly a disinterested third party, let loose with a similar diatribe. For some reason he singled out my new hero, Steve Webb, as being some sort of gutless puke for not fighting. All Webb did was throw 11 hits in 10 minutes of ice time, many of them absolute beauties. I would have thought that was Don Cherry Hockey. Maybe if Webb played for the Leafs... But no, Cherry seemed to be in the same belligerent frame of mind that had seen his "boys" Tucker and Roberts tossed from the game for blatant instigating of fights against unwilling or unwitting opponents (Tucker on Blake, Roberts on Czerkawski in a particularly gutless post-game assault). You'd think with all the practice he's had, Cherry wouldn't be such a poor loser. Fact is, *he* didn't lose, although you'd never know it. Get a grip, Grapes.

Roberts did get his when Brad Isbister got hold of him in the aftermath. And Domi got his when he took a run at an Islander, missed, and nearly fell through the open gate at the Leafs' bench, his ass pinballing off the corners of the gate like a billiard ball caught in the jaws. And Tucker got his when he was crushed, hard and clean and for the second time, by my new hero, Steve Webb. Furthermore he got a penalty for closing his hand on the puck of all things, AND the Islanders scored on the powerplay. It was highlight reel stuff, the whole third period, and I was laughing so hard I didn't even switch to see the thrilling Montreal comeback. Only the lowest of the low, Corson, somehow emerged unscathed (unless you consider foaming at the mouth). Saving the best for last?

I remember Curtis Joseph being pretty much unflappable when he played here. In Toronto, he blows his cool on a fairly frequent basis. Whazzup? The other night he loses his blocker and stick, picks up the stick from his crease first, then carefully lays it down outside his crease while he grabs his blocker. By the time he gets that on the puck's back in the zone, the goalstick out of reach because of where Joseph deliberately put it. Guess where the puck goes? Along the ice, under Cujo, and in the net. 14 seconds later, he makes a brutal giveaway and the puck's in his net again! Then last night, he gives up two absolutely brutal goals in the dying minutes with the game on the line. And how many greasy rebounds in the two games, a million? For sure, four that wound up in the net. I don't hate Cujo or anything, but it's kind of interesting to see him melt down in the pressure cooker of Hogwashtown.

Finally, a word about Our Fearless Leader. I was scratching my head and wondering aloud when Quinn put Domi on the ice in the last minute of a 6-1 blowout. I said to the three (!) people watching the game with me, "The last time Quinn put Domi out in the last minute of a playoff game, he got a 10-game suspension." Domi didn't successfully instigate a fight, not for want of trying, but Roberts did, and when all the gloves were off there was Mats Sundin dancing with one of the Islanders. Again I commented on the curious personnel decision, why expose your star player in a hopeless situation, especially when *you* have malice aforethought? What I didn't know at the time, and Quinn did, was that Sundin was already nursing a wrist injury that was -- or became in the fight -- serious enough to keep him out of last night's game. Pat Quinn should be fired.

Date: Mon, 06 May 2002 22:32:57 -0700
Subject: Re: "Jinx" Cole and sour Grapes
Jinxes are bullshit. You think what those guys said actually affected what happened on the ice?

And I say that stranger things have happened. Some extremely intelligent people would argue that if millions of people who are passionately focused on an event simultaneously either verbally or mentally shout "DON'T SAY SHUTOUT!!!", that it might have an effect. And any Buddhist could tell you that when a butterfly on some mountaintop in Peru flaps it's wings, the breeze will eventually be felt by everyone on earth. Is that bullshit? Makes you wonder...

Although you certainly could make a case tonight, based on circumstantial evidence. It was uncanny, Cole mentioned it, Lalime made a point blank stop, then Neale mentioned it with a big graphic about all the guys with four shutouts like the unforgettable Frank "Ulcers" McCool (a great story for another day) , the Leafs won the faceoff and scored. And then they got a fluke on a triple deflection (off Chara, off Redden, off Bonk and in), and then they damn near tied it up. Weird.

Weird and uncanny discribe it pretty well.

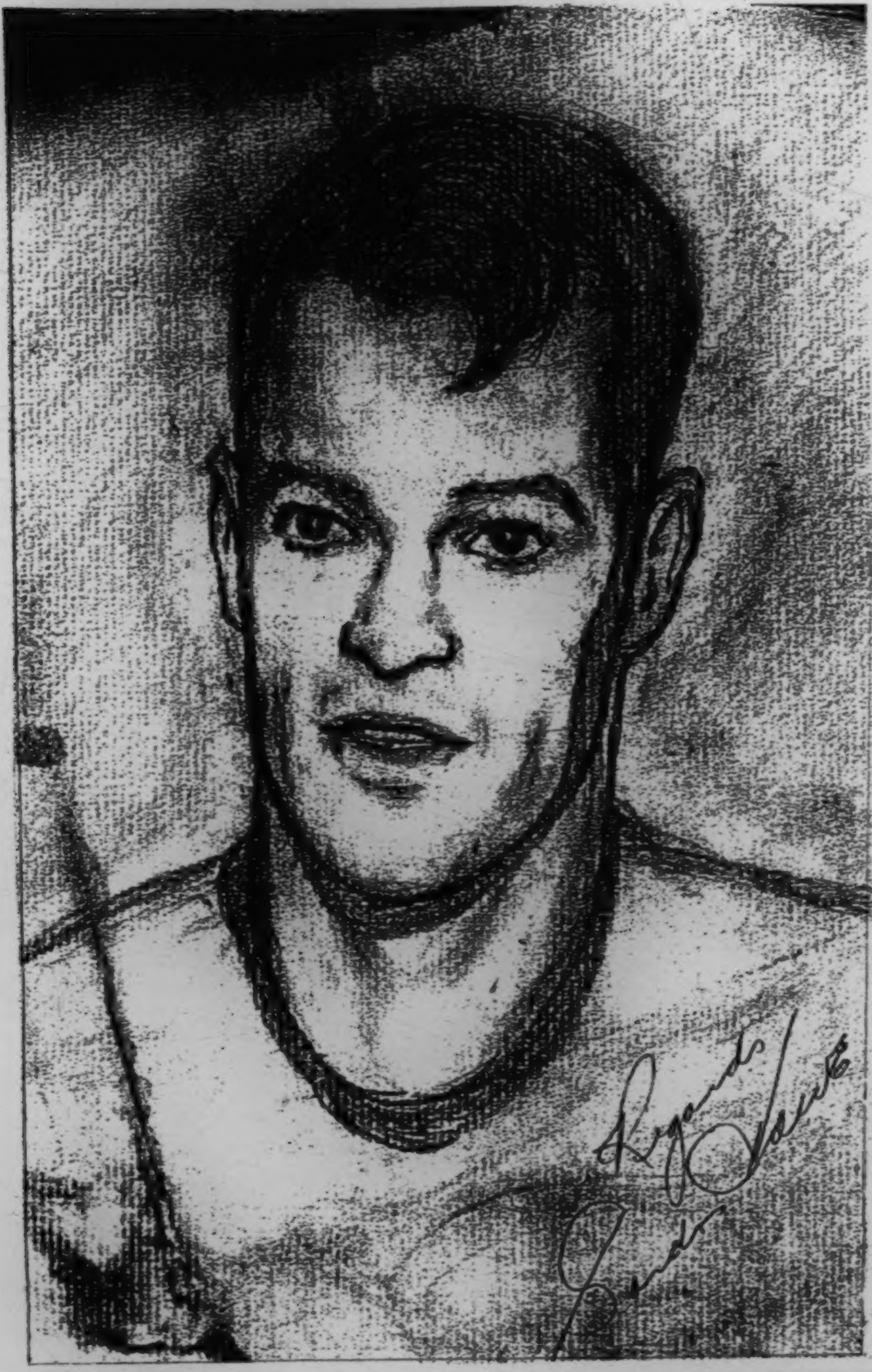
Anyways, my all-time favourite jinx story involves Dick Irvin Jr. Back in the late 60s the Hawks had a long string of over 200 games where they never got shut out even once. One night the Habs had 'em down 1-0 late in the third, Irvin mentioned the streak, the Hawks pulled the goalie and tied it up. So the *next* time the Hawks were in Montreal on a Saturday night, it was 1-0 Habs midway through the second period, and Irvin said I better mention it now so people don't accuse me of jinxing, and the words were still coming out of his mouth when Pit Martin won a faceoff back to Dennis Hull and wham! 1-1. It literally took two seconds. Danny Gallivan said something absolutely hilarious like "Keep those cards and letters coming, folks". Final score: 1-1, again. I kind of have a soft spot (in my head?) for old Dick Irvin today, but at the time he was a Habs fan and I wasn't, so I just cackled. I still think that was one of the funniest things I've ever heard involving an announcer.

Hey, as I was reading that, it all came back. I remember that whole sequence of events, and at the time it gave me the goosebumps, which is probably why it's stuck with me so long, this superstition. And I know that's all it is, though I am still shocked that Cole would flaunt this particular superstition when he did.

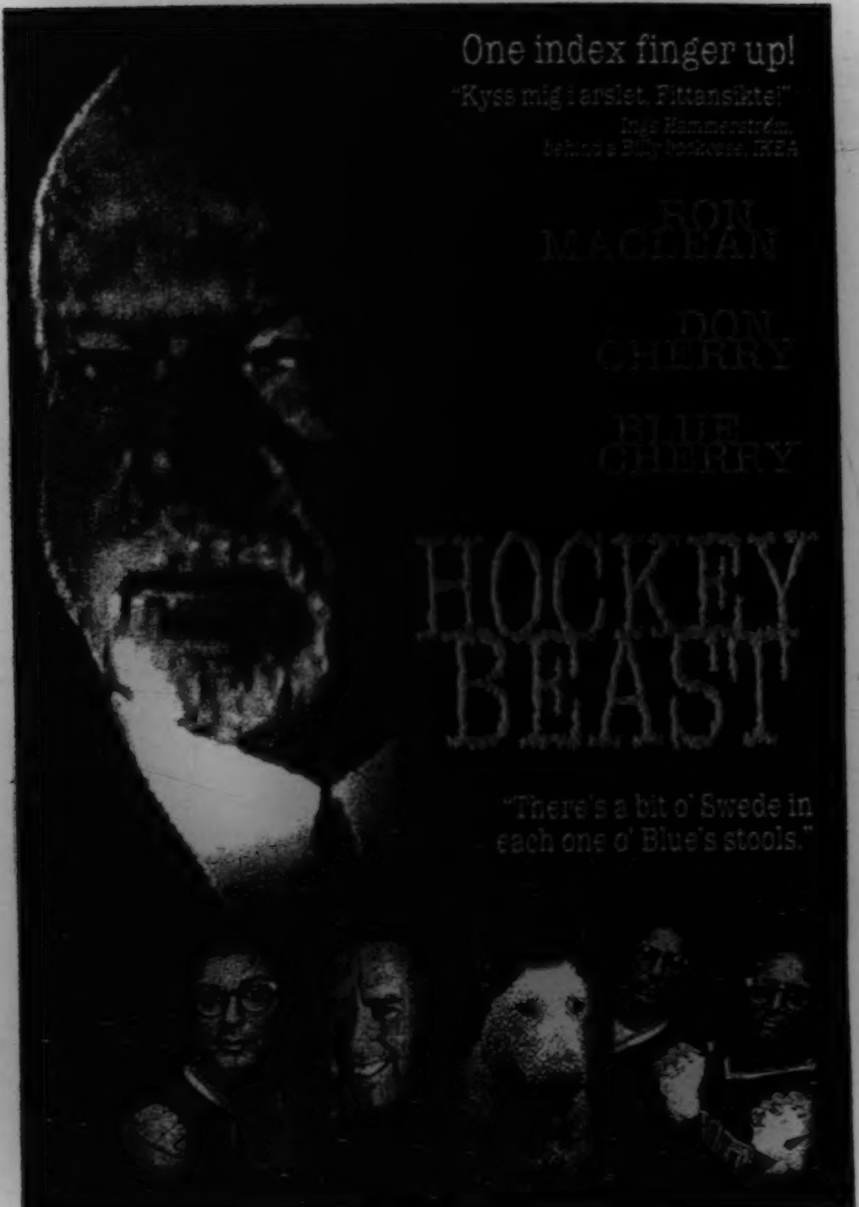
Not so funny is Don Cherry. What's up with this "we" bullshit? There's two Canadian teams playing, asshole. In fact, there's two teams playing, period; show 'em both some respect (or when they deserve it, disrespect). Whining about goals that should have been disallowed, penalties that should or shouldn't have been called, etc., etc., belongs on local casts of Missisauga Ice Dogs games on Channel 115. If that. For CBC to condone it on national TV is a goddam disgrace. Let's get Kelly Hrudey in there to do a professional job.

Couldn't agree with you more. But I'll bet his Pub in Toronto's doing real good business, since he went from being a Boston fan to a Leaf's fan. Oh well, he's not the first person to make a good living in this country by being a loudmouth, bigoted, ignorant asshole. Look at most of the politicians....

Appendix 'D': Gordie Howe


Regards
Gordie Howe

Appendix 'E': "Hockey Beast"


One index finger up!
"Kyss mig i arslet, Fittansikte!"
Inge Hammerström,
behind a Billy bookcase, IKEA
RON
MACLEAN
DON
CHERRY
BLUE
CHERRY
HOCKEY
BEAST
"There's a bit o' Swede in
each one o' Blue's stools."

(from *Frank Magazine, May 1, 2002, issue 375, page 22)*